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48. 1766.



THE
IRISH CRISIS.

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BY

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THE IRISH CRISIS.

THE time has not yet arrived at which any man can with confidence say, that he fully appreciates the nature and the bearings of that great event which will long be inseparably associated with the year just departed. Yet we think that we may render some service to the public by attempting thus early to review, with the calm temper of a future generation, the history of the great Irish famine of 1847*. Unless we are much deceived, posterity will trace up to that famine the commencement of a salutary revolution in the habits of a nation long singularly unfortunate, and will acknowledge that on this, as on many other occasions, Supreme Wisdom has educed permanent good out of transient evil.

* We have endeavoured to gather up all the threads of this strange tissue, so that every circumstance of importance connected with the measures of relief may be placed on record; but our narrative does not, except in a few instances, extend beyond September 1847, and the progress of events after that date will form the subject of a separate article.

B

If, a few months ago, an enlightened man had been asked what he thought the most discouraging circumstance in the state of Ireland, we do not imagine that he would have pitched upon Absenteeism, or Protestant bigotry, or Roman Catholic bigotry, or Orangeism, or Ribbandism, or the Repeal cry, or even the system of threatening notices and midday assassinations. These things, he would have said, are evils; but some of them are curable; and others are merely symptomatic. They do not make the case desperate. But what hope is there for a nation which lives on potatoes?

The consequences of depending upon the potato as the principal article of popular food, had long been foreseen by thinking persons; and the following observations extracted from a paper on the native country of the wild potato*, published in the Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London for the year 1822, are a fair specimen of the opinions which prevailed on the subject previously to the great failure of 1845.

“The increased growth of the potato, not

* The author of this paper was the late Mr. Joseph Sabine, the Secretary to the Horticultural Society.

only in these kingdoms, but almost in every civilised part of the globe, has so added to its importance, that any information respecting it has become valuable. With the exception of wheat and rice, it is now certainly the vegetable most employed as the food of man; and it is probable that the period is at no great distance, when its extensive use will even place it before those which have hitherto been considered the chief staples of life. The effect of the unlimited extent to which its cultivation may be carried, on the human race, must be a subject of deep interest to the political economist. The extension of population will be as unbounded as the production of food, which is capable of being produced in very small space, and with great facility; and the increased number of inhabitants of the earth will necessarily induce changes, not only in the political systems, but in all the artificial relations of civilised life. How far such changes may conduce to or increase the happiness of mankind, is very problematical, more especially when it is considered, that since the potato, when in cultivation, is very liable to injury from casualties of season, and that it is not at present known how to keep it in store for use beyond a few months, a general failure of the year's crop, whenever it shall have become the chief or sole support of a country, must inevitably lead to all the misery of famine, more dreadful in proportion to the numbers exposed to its ravages."

The important influence which has been exercised by this root over the destinies of the human race, arises from the fact that it yields an unusually abundant produce as compared with the extent of ground cultivated, and with the labour, capital, and skill bestowed upon its cultivation. The same land, which when laid down to corn, will maintain a given number of persons, will support three times that number when used for raising potatoes. "A family in the West of Ireland, once located on from one to three or four acres of land, was provided for; a cabin could be raised in a few days without the expense of a sixpence; the potatoes, at the cost of a very little labour, supplied them with a sufficiency of food, with which, from habit, they were perfectly content; and a pig, or with some, a cow, or donkey, or pony, and occasional labour at a very low rate of wages, gave them what was necessary to pay a rent, and for such clothing and other articles as were absolutely necessary, and which, with a great proportion, were on the lowest scale of human existence. The foundation of the whole, however, was the possession of the bit of land; it was the one, and the only one thing absolutely necessary; the rent consequently was high, and

generally well paid, being the first demand on all money received, in order to secure that essential tenure; and only what remained became applicable to other objects. Although of the lowest grade, it was an easy mode of subsistence, and led to the encouragement of early marriages, large families, and a rapidly-increasing population, and at the same time afforded the proprietor very good return of profit for his land*.”

The relations of employer and employed, which knit together the framework of society, and establish a mutual dependence and good-will, have no existence in the potato system. The Irish small holder lives in a state of isolation, the type of which is to be sought for in the islands of the South Sea, rather than in the great civilized communities of the ancient world. A fortnight for planting, a week or ten days for digging, and another fortnight for turf-cutting, suffice for his subsistence; and during the rest of the year, he is at leisure to follow his own inclinations, without even the safeguard of those intellectual tastes and legitimate objects of ambition which only imperfectly obviate the evils of leisure in the higher ranks of society.

* Sir John Burgoyne's letter to the "Times," dated 14th October, 1847.

The excessive competition for land maintained rents at a level which left the Irish peasant the bare means of subsistence; and poverty, discontent, and idleness, acting on his excitable nature, produced that state of popular feeling which furnishes the material for every description of illegal association and misdirected political agitation. That agrarian code which is at perpetual war with the laws of God and man, is more especially the offspring of this state of society, the primary object being to secure the possession of the plots of land, which, in the absence of wages, are the sole means of subsistence.

There is a gradation even in potatoes. Those generally used by the people of Ireland were of the coarsest and most prolific kind, called "Lumpers," or "Horse Potatoes," from their size, and they were, for the most part, cultivated, not in furrows, but in the slovenly mode popularly known as "lazy beds;" so that the principle of seeking the cheapest description of food at the smallest expense of labour, was maintained in all its force. To the universal dependence on the potato, and to the absence of farmers of a superior class, it was owing that agriculture of every description was carried on in a neg-

ligent, imperfect manner*. The domestic habits arising out of this mode of subsistence were of the lowest and most degrading kind. The pigs and poultry, which share the food of the peasant's family, became, in course, inmates of the cabin also. The habit of exclusively living on this root produced an entire ignorance of every other food and of the means of preparing it; and there is

* The following description of the state of agriculture in West Clare, previously to the failure in the potato crop in 1845, is taken from a narrative by Captain Mann of the Royal Navy, who had for some time previously been stationed in that district, in charge of the Coast Guard, and when the distress commenced, he took an active and very useful part in assisting in the measures of relief: "Agriculture at that period was in a very neglected state; wheat, barley, and oats, with potatoes as the food of the poor, being the produce. Of the first very little was produced, and that not good in quality; barley, a larger proportion and good; oats, much greater, but inferior for milling purposes. Various reasons were given for this inferiority in produce, the quality of the land and deteriorated seed being the cause generally assigned; but I would say that the population being content with, and relying on, the produce of the potato as food—which had with very few exceptions hitherto proved abundant—there was a general neglect and want of any attempt at improvement. Green crops were all but unknown, except here and there a little turnip or mangel wurzel in the garden or field of the better class,—the former scarcely to be purchased. Even the potatoes were tilled in the easiest way, (in beds called 'lazy beds'), not in drills, so that the hoe might in a very short time clear the weeds and lighten the soil."

scarcely a woman of the peasant class in the West of Ireland, whose culinary art exceeds the boiling of a potato. Bread is scarcely ever seen, and an oven is unknown.

The first step to improvement was wanting to this state of things. The people had no incitement to be industrious to procure comforts which were utterly beyond their reach, and which many of them perhaps had never seen. Their ordinary food being of the cheapest and commonest description, and having no value in the market, it gave them no command of butcher's meat, manufactures, colonial produce, or any other article of comfort or enjoyment. To those who subsist chiefly on corn, other articles of equal value are available, which can be substituted for it at their discretion; or if they please, they can, by the adoption of a less expensive diet, accumulate a small capital by which their future condition may be improved and secured; but the only hope for those who lived upon potatoes was in some great intervention of Providence to bring back the potato to its original use and intention as an adjunct, and not as a principal article of national food; and by compelling the people of Ireland to recur to other more nutritious means of aliment, to restore the

energy and the vast industrial capabilities of that country.

A population, whose ordinary food is wheat and beef, and whose ordinary drink is porter and ale, can retrench in periods of scarcity, and resort to cheaper kinds of food, such as barley, oats, rice, and potatoes. But those who are habitually and entirely fed on potatoes, live upon the extreme verge of human subsistence, and when they are deprived of their accustomed food, there is nothing cheaper to which they can resort. They have already reached the lowest point in the descending scale, and there is nothing beyond but starvation or beggary. Several circumstances aggravate the hazard of this position. The produce of the potato is more precarious than that of wheat or any other grain. Besides many other proofs of the uncertainty of this crop, there is no instance on record of any such failure of the crops of corn, as occurred in the case of potatoes in 1821, 1845, 1846, and 1847; showing that this root can no longer be depended upon as a staple article of human food. The potato cannot be stored so that the scarcity of one year may be alleviated by bringing forward the reserves of former years, as is always done in corn-feeding

countries. Every year is thus left to provide subsistence for itself. When the crop is luxuriant, the surplus must be given to the pigs; and when it is deficient, famine and disease necessarily prevail. Lastly, the bulk of potatoes is such, that they can with difficulty be conveyed from place to place to supply local deficiencies, and it has often happened that severe scarcity has prevailed in districts within fifty miles of which potatoes were to be had in abundance. If a man use two pounds of meal a-day (which is twice the amount of the ration found to be sufficient during the late relief operations), a hundredweight of meal will last him for fifty-six days; whereas a hundredweight of potatoes will not last more than eight days; and when it was proposed to provide seed-potatoes for those who had lost their stock in the failure of 1845-6, the plan was found impracticable, because nearly a ton an acre would have been required for the purpose.

The potato does not, in fact, last even a single year. The old crop becomes unfit for use in July, and the new crop, as raised by the inferior husbandry of the poor, does not come into consumption until September. Hence, July and August are called the

“meal months,” from the necessity the people are under of living upon meal at that period. This is always a season of great distress and trial for the poorer peasants; and in the districts in which the potato system has been carried to the greatest extent, as, for instance, in the barony of Erris in the county of Mayo, there has been an annual dearth in the summer months for many years past. Every now and then a “meal year” occurs, and then masses of the population become a prey to famine and fever, except so far as they may be relieved by charity.

In 1739 an early and severe frost destroyed the potatoes in the ground, and the helplessness and despair of the people having led to a great falling off of tillage in 1740, the calamity was prolonged to the ensuing year, 1741, which was long known as the *bliadhain an air*, or year of slaughter. The ordinary burial-grounds were not large enough to contain those who died by the roadside, or who were taken from the deserted cabins. The “bloody flux” and “malignant fever,” having begun among the poor, spread to the rich, and numerous individuals occupying prominent positions in society, including one of the judges (Mr.

Baron Wainwright), and the Mayor of Limerick (Joseph Roche, Esq.), and many others of the corporation, fell victims. Measures were adopted at Dublin on the principle of the English Poor Law, some of the most essential provisions of which appear to have been well understood in the great towns of Ireland in that day; and it was "hoped, since such provision is made for the poor, the inhabitants of the city will discourage all vagrant beggars, and give their assistance that they may be sent to Bridewell to hard labour, and thereby free themselves from a set of idlers who are a scandal and a reproach to the nation." Soup-kitchens and other modes of relief were established in different parts of the country, in which Primate Boulter and the Society of Friends took the lead; and numerous cargoes of corn were procured on mercantile account from the North American Colonies, the arrival of which was looked for with great anxiety. In only one point is there any decided difference between what then took place in Ireland and the painful events which have just occurred, after the lapse of upwards of a century. The famine of 1741 was not regarded with any active interest either in England or in any foreign country, and the subject is

scarcely alluded to in the literature of the day. No measures were adopted either by the Executive or the Legislature for the purpose of relieving the distress caused by this famine. There is no mention of grants or loans ; but an Act was passed by the Irish Parliament in 1741 (15 Geo. II, cap. 8), " For the more effectual securing the payment of Rents, and preventing frauds by Tenants*."

The failure of 1822, in the provinces of Munster and Connaught, was owing to a continued and excessive humidity, which caused the potatoes to rot after they had been stored in the pits, so that the deficiency of food was not discovered till late in the season. On the 7th May, 1822, a public meeting was held in London which was attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the most eminent persons of the day, when a committee of no less than 109 of the nobility and gentry was formed, and a subscription was entered into, amounting, with the aid of a king's letter, to 311,081*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.*, of which 44,177*l.* 9*s.* was raised in Ireland. Many excellent principles were

* We are indebted for these particulars to Mr. McCullagh, who has lately collected the contemporary accounts of this famine. It appears that the farmers at this period did not dig their potatoes until about Christmas, and that few stored them at all for use.

laid down for the distribution of this large sum; and after reserving what was required for immediate relief, the balance, amounting to 87,667*l.*, was granted to various societies which had been established for the future and permanent benefit of the Irish peasantry*. A committee also sat at the Mansion House at Dublin, which collected 31,260*l.* from various quarters, independently of the grants it received from the London Committee. Central Committees were established in each county town in the distressed districts, and Sub-Committees in each parish. The western portion of Ireland was also divided into three districts, to each of which a civil engineer was appointed for the purpose of employing the destitute in making roads, and the following sums were voted by Parliament for carrying on these and other Public Works set on foot with the same object of relieving the distress† :

* An interesting account by Mr. Bertolacci, of the manner in which this fund and that collected in 1831 were distributed, will be found in the "Morning Chronicle" of the 25th November, 1847.

† For the details of these operations see the following Parliamentary papers:—

"Copies of the Reports of Messrs. Griffith, Nimmo, and Killaly, the civil engineers employed during the late scarcity, in superintending the Public Works in Ireland; 16 April, 1823 (249)."

On 24 June, 1822, £100,000,
“for the employment of the poor in Ireland, and other purposes relating thereto as the exigency of affairs may require.”

On 23 July, 1822, £200,000,
“to enable His Majesty to take such measures as the exigency of affairs may require.”

And on the 24 June, 1823, £15,000 was voted,

“to facilitate emigration from the south of Ireland to the Cape of Good Hope.”

In 1831 another failure of the potato crop occurred in the counties of Galway, Mayo, and Donegal, upon which another meeting was held in the City of London, and one committee was established at the Mansion House, and another at the West End. Great exertions were made to raise subscriptions; a bazaar was held at the

“Report from the Select Committee on the employment of the poor in Ireland; 16 July, 1823 (561).”

It is a remarkable testimony to the improvement effected by such works in the social habits of the people, that the district between the Shannon and the Blackwater, which was opened in four directions by the roads executed by Mr. Griffith, although formerly the seat of the Desmond Rebellion, and subsequently, in the year 1821, the asylum for Whiteboys and the focus of the Whiteboy warfare, during which time four regiments were required to repress outrage, became perfectly tranquil, and continued so up to the commencement of the late calamity.

Hanover Square Rooms by many of the ladies of the nobility, presided over by the Queen in person; and there was a ball at Drury Lane Theatre, which was honoured by the presence of the King and Queen. The whole amount collected was 74,410*l.*; and besides this 40,000*l.* was granted by Parliament, part of which was expended on relief works, and part in the actual distribution of food. Besides these London Committees, two other Committees were formed at Dublin, through one of which (the Mansion House Committee*) 8,569*l.* was col-

* The following remarkable passage is extracted from the Report of the Dublin Mansion House Committee, dated the 22nd October, 1831 :—

“But while the Mansion House Committee thus congratulate themselves and the subscribers upon the success of their efforts to avert famine and disease for a season from so considerable a portion of the island, they owe it also to themselves and the subscribers to avow their honest conviction that similar calls will be periodically made on public benevolence, unless a total change be effected in the condition of the Irish peasant. What means should be adopted to remedy these evils it is not the province of this Committee to suggest; but they deem it their duty to call the attention of the subscribers particularly to this state of things, in the hope of some remedy being discovered and applied before public benevolence is quite exhausted by repeated drains on its sympathy.”

On the 21st May, 1838, the Duke of Wellington made the following observations in the debate on the intro-

lected, and through the other (the Sackville Street Committee) 21,526*l*.

In each of the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, the potato crop failed in one or other of the districts in the West of Ireland, and sums amounting in the aggregate to 7,572*l*. were expended from Civil Contingencies in relieving the distress thereby occasioned, to which was added the sum of 4,306*l*. remaining from the English and Irish subscriptions of 1831.

In 1839 another failure occurred; and in all the Western and Midland Counties, the average price of potatoes in July and August was 7*d*. a stone, and of oatmeal 18*s*. or 19*s*. a cwt.; the former double, and the latter one-third more than the usual price at that time of the year. On this occasion Captain Chads, R.N., was deputed by the Govern-

duction of the Irish Poor Law:—"There never was a country in which poverty existed to so great a degree as it exists in Ireland. I held a high situation in that country thirty years ago, and I must say, that, from that time to this, there has scarcely elapsed a single year, in which the Government has not at certain periods of it entertained the most serious apprehension of actual famine. I am firmly convinced that from the year 1806, down to the present time, a year has not passed in which the Government have not been called on to give assistance to relieve the poverty and distress which prevailed in Ireland."

ment to assist the landlords in employing the destitute in constructing roads and other useful public works; and it appears from a report addressed by him to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, dated the 22nd of August, 1839, that 5,441*l.* was expended in this way, of which 1840*l.* was contributed by the Government, besides 1478*l.* disbursed through other channels. Towards the conclusion of his report Captain Chads made the following remarks:—"A recurrence of these seasons of distress, which have been almost periodical hitherto, must, I fear, be necessarily expected, so long as the present condition of the poor continues, and whilst they subsist on that species of food, which in a year of plenty cannot be stored up for the next, which may be one of scarcity. A very great alleviation, however, of this evil is most confidently expected from the Poor Law now being established. I have conversed on this subject with persons of every class of society, from one end of the country to the other, and it is universally regarded as the promise of a great blessing:—to the poor by inducing more provident and industrious habits; and by making it the interest of the landlords to give them employment; and to all other classes, comfort and contentment, from

the knowledge that the really distressed are provided for, and that the country is generally improving by the extension of employment."

After this, urgent representations of distress were made in each year to the Irish Government and to the Poor Law Commissioners, until the summer of 1842, which was more than usually wet and unfavourable to vegetation, and it therefore again became necessary to have recourse to extensive measures of relief. On this occasion 3,448*l.* was distributed in aid of local subscriptions, in 121 separate districts; the aggregate sums raised in each case being expended, partly in public works on Captain Chads' plan, and partly in giving gratuitous relief*.

Besides the grants above enumerated, made for the immediate relief of the Irish poor, when failures of the potato crop caused unusual distress, large sums of money have been advanced or granted from the Imperial

* The particulars of what took place on this occasion will be found in a letter from the Poor Law Commissioners to Sir J. Graham, dated the 9th June, 1842, and in a statement dated 18th August, 1842, prepared under the directions of the Irish Government, showing "the sums issued for the relief of distress in Ireland from the 17th June to the 17th August, 1842," &c. {

Treasury from time to time since the Union, for various purposes supposed to be conducive to the tranquillity and improvement of the country, and to the removal of the causes of permanent distress, as will be seen from the following specimens taken principally from a return to an order of the House of Commons of the 12th February, 1847, made on the motion of Mr. John O'Connell*.

Works for Special Purposes under the Act 57 Geo. III., cap. 34	496,000
Do. for the Employment and Relief of the Poor, under the 1 & 2 Wm. IV., cap. 33, and previous Acts	1,339,146
Grants in aid of Public Works under various Acts of Parliament	125,000
Advanced by the London Loan Commissioners for sundry Works between 1826 and 1833 . .	322,500
Do. do. for Poor-Law Union Workhouses . .	1,145,800
Kingstown Harbour	1,124,586
Improvement of the River Shannon	533,359
Wide Street Commissioners, Dublin	267,778
Improving Post Roads	515,541
Gaols and Bridewells	713,005
Asylums for Lunatic Poor	710,850
Valuation of Lands and Tenements	172,774
Royal Dublin Society	285,438
Farming Society, Dublin	87,132
Linen Board, Dublin	537,656
Tithe (Relief of Clergy who did not receive Tithes of 1831)	50,916
Tithe Relief (Million Act)	918,863
Tithe Relief Commissioners (establishing Composition for Tithes)	279,217

* This Return is for sums "advanced on loan since the Union," but in some cases the advances have not been repaid, and in others large grants were made in addition to loans.

Relief of Trade	178,070
Boards and Officers of Health (Cholera)	196,575
Police Purposes (Proclaimed Districts)	4,693,871
Police Purposes (Constabulary Police)	1,748,712

Other causes concurred with the natural tendency of every people to have recourse to the cheapest description of food, in encouraging the growth of a large population depending for its subsistence on the potato. Ireland was essentially a grazing country until the artificial enhancement of prices caused by the Acts of the Irish Parliament passed in 1783 and 1784, for granting a bounty on the exportation, and restricting the importation of corn, occasioned an immediate and extraordinary increase of cultivation; and as, owing to the general want of capital, it was impossible to find tenants for large tillage farms, the stimulus intended to act exclusively on agriculture, had a still more powerful effect in causing the subdivision of farms. The new occupiers also, being, for the most part, exceedingly poor, instead of paying their labourers in money, allowed them the use of small pieces of ground whereon they might erect cabins and raise potatoes, and their labour was set off, at so much a-day, against the annual rent. The plan of dividing and subdividing for the purpose of making freeholders, was

carried to a great extent after 1792, when the elective franchise was restored to the Roman Catholics; and although the practice was far from being general, yet in some parts of the country, where particular families made it their object to contest or secure the county, it was carried to a very pernicious extent. Another powerful cause is that the emoluments of the Roman Catholic priesthood, including the bishops, depend not only on the extent of the population, but also on its continual increase; and if the parish priests object to emigration and the consolidation of small holdings, and look with favour on early marriages, it is only what any other body of men, in their circumstances, would equally do. Lastly, the small holding and potato system offered the inducement of large rents, obtained at the smallest possible amount of cost and trouble. The embarrassed and improvident landlord, and the leaseholder whose only object it was to make the most of his short tenure, equally found their account in this state of things, and the result in both cases was, that the farms were covered with hovels and miserable cottiers, in order, through them, to create profit-rents. When the failure of the potato forced all the "squatters" and

“mock tenants” into notice, the owner of many a neglected estate was surprised by the apparition of hundreds of miserable beings, who had grown up on his property without his knowledge, and now claimed the means of support at his hands. The subsistence of the tenant was at the minimum; the rent was at the maximum; and the interval between the ignorant excitable peasantry and the proprietor in chief, was filled only by the middleman, whose business it was to exact rents and not to employ labourers. The base and the capital of the column were there, but the shaft was almost entirely wanting.

The extent to which the welfare of the agricultural population, and through them of the rest of the community, is affected by the conditions upon which landed property is held, has become fearfully apparent during the present social crisis. The dependence for good and evil of workman on master manufacturer, of subject on Government, of child on father, is less absolute than that of the Irish peasant upon the lord of the soil from which he derives his subsistence. This is a subject to which, if we would save ourselves and our country, it behoves us to give our most earnest and

careful attention at the present time. We cannot give landed proprietors the will and disposition (where it is wanting) to fulfil the important part they have to perform in the scheme of society, but we have it in our power to strike off the fetters which at present impede every step of their progress in the performance of the duty they owe to themselves and to those dependent on them.

One half of the surface of Ireland is said to be let off in perpetuity leases, with derivative and subderivative interests in an endless chain, so as to obtain profit-rents at each stage; and these leases are often open to the additional objection that they are unnecessarily burthensome or uncertain from the particular mode in which they are made; such as "leases for lives renewable for ever by the insertion of other lives when the first-named are dead," "for three lives or thirty-one years," and "for three lives *and* thirty-one years." Many proposals have at different times been made for the redemption of these various interests; but an arbitrary interference with the rights of property is to be avoided, and our object should rather be to give every prudent facility for the voluntary transfer of land

and of the various interests connected with it, which must lead, by a safe but certain gradation, to that degree of improvement of the existing tenures which is necessary for the encouragement of agriculture. In the flourishing islands of Guernsey and Jersey, corn-rents of fixed amount are charged upon the same farm one after another, like the coats of an onion; but the lowest holder, who is the party really interested in the improvement of the property, has every requisite security that he will enjoy the whole profit of any outlay he may make, and the most essential part of the benefit of ownership is thus obtained. In Mayo and other western counties the old barbarous Irish tenure called *Rundale* (Scotch *runrigg*), still prevails, which stops short of the institution of individual property, and by making the industrious and thriving responsible for the short-comings of the idle and improvident, effectually destroys the spring of all improvement. The cessation of this antiquated system is an indispensable preliminary to any progress being made in the localities where it exists; but this improvement may be effected by the landlords without any change in the law.

The master evil of the agricultural system

of Ireland, however, is the law of Entail, and the Incumbrances which seldom fail to accumulate upon entailed estates. "Proprietors of estates," observes the author of an excellent pamphlet which has recently appeared on this subject*, "are too often but mere nominal owners, without influence or power over the persons holding under them. Their real condition is often pitiable, nor is it possible, in the great majority of cases, to retrieve the estates. The burthen of debt, or the evils of improvident leases, are fastened upon the land in such a manner as to convert the owner into a mere annuitant, often glad to obtain from a good estate a scanty annuity (after payment of the incumbrances thereon and the public

* "Observations upon certain evils arising out of the present state of the Laws of Real Property in Ireland, and Suggestions for remedying the same." — Dublin: Alex. Thom, 1847. The author of this pamphlet is Mr. Booth, who has for many years past held the responsible office of Clerk of the Survey in Ireland, under the Master-General and Board of Ordnance. It will be seen by a perusal of the pamphlet, that this able and deserving officer has fully availed himself of the opportunities which his situation afforded, for making himself acquainted with the social state of Ireland; and that he has successfully applied to the consideration of the subject, that practical ability from which the public service has derived so much benefit.

burthens) for his own subsistence. Proprietor and tenant are equally powerless for good; and the whole kingdom suffers from the disorders which have resulted from this state of real property in Ireland." And the author of another valuable publication on the same subject* observes as follows: "The evils resulting from settlements and entails may be regarded as arising from insecurity or uncertainty of tenure; because the possessor of the property is not in reality the owner; he cannot deal with it as an owner; he is merely a trustee for others; he has no interest in its future thorough permanent improvement, except so far as he may wish

* "Observations on the evils resulting to Ireland from the insecurity of Title and the existing Laws of Real Property, with some Suggestions towards a remedy."—Dublin: Hodges and Smith. London: Ridgway; 1847. The author of this pamphlet is Mr. Jonathan Pim, who, in the capacity of joint secretary, with Mr. Joseph Bewley, of the Dublin Friends' Relief Committee, took the lead in the admirably benevolent and practical measures adopted by that excellent society for the relief of the distress, and the re-establishment of the industry of Ireland on a more secure and satisfactory footing than before. Mr. Pim is also the author of a more extended work, entitled "The Condition and Prospects of Ireland," which has just been published, and which, if we mistake not, will prove one of the most useful publications which have yet appeared on this deeply interesting subject.

to benefit his successors; he can never reap the benefit himself; he cannot sell; he cannot dispose of a part, even though the alienation of a part might greatly enhance the value of the remainder; he holds it during his lifetime, as his predecessor held it, unaltered, unimproved, to transmit it to his heir clogged with the same restrictions alike injurious to him and to his country. This is the case of an unembarrassed landlord*. But let us suppose, as is unfortu-

* It is perfectly true that the unembarrassed holder of an entailed estate is often not sufficiently owner of it to be able to do justice to it. He cannot sell a portion to improve the remainder, however much both the part sold and the part retained would be benefited by it. He can burden the estate to provide for younger children's portions, but not to carry on improvements which would increase its annual produce. Improvements are generally made out of capital, and not out of income. Owners of entailed estates, for the most part, live up to their means; and when they do not, their savings are seldom sufficient to carry on works of any importance. Over the capital sum representing the aggregate value of the estate, they have no command, except for purposes which make them poorer, and consequently still less able to execute any useful design. At the present crisis of our national affairs, it behoves us to consider what course will be the best both for the landowners and for the community at large. There is a fearful surplus population in Ireland and the north-western part of Scotland which must be provided for; while in England itself thousands of railway labourers and Irish paupers roam unemployed about the country; and the question is, whether, by removing the

nately too often the case, that he has received the estate incumbered under a settlement, with a jointure to the widow of the late possessor, and a provision for daughters and younger sons. In what difficulties is he at once involved! this owner for life of a large tract of country with a long rent-roll, but in fact a small property! He cannot maintain his position in society without spending more than his income; debts accumulate; he mortgages his estate, and insures his life for the security of the mortgagee. Of course he cannot afford to lay out anything on improvements; on the contrary, though perhaps naturally kind-hearted and just, his necessities force him to resort to every means of increasing his present rental. He looks for the utmost amount; he lets to the highest bidder, without regard to character or means of payment. If his tenants are without leases, he raises their rents. If leases fall in, he cannot afford to give the preference to the last occupier. Perhaps, with all his exertions, he is unable

obstacles which at present oppose the profitable employment of the enormous capital invested in land, we might not obtain new resources which would enrich the owners of land, diffuse comfort and enjoyment in each locality, and help to provide for the unemployed population which is sitting like an incubus upon all the three kingdoms.

to pay the interest or put off his creditors. Proceedings are commenced against him, and the estate passes during his lifetime under the care of the worst possible landlord, a Receiver under the Court of Chancery*."

* The following Table gives the leading particulars relating to the estates under the management of the Courts in Ireland during the years 1841-2 and 3:

<i>Court of Chancery.</i>						
	No. of Causes	Rental of Estates.	Arrears of Rent.			
			When Receiver was appointed.		When Receiver last accounted.	
1841.	698	£ 598,635 13 10½	£ 39,358 16 4½	£ 347,226 14 10	s. d.	
1842.	595	543,783 12 9	3,105 0 10	299,554 10 8		
1843.	764	563,022 2 4	39,265 13 1	290,292 4 10		
Average of three years	686	570,147 2 11½	27,243 3 5	312,357 16 10		
<i>Court of Exchequer.</i>						
	316	132,675 2 3	56,163 6 6	87,849 0 11½		
From 1836 to 1843 inclusive,						

The arrears of rent have since greatly increased,

The remedy for this state of things is simply the sale of the encumbered estate, or of a sufficient portion of it to enable the owner to discharge his encumbrances and to place him in a position to do his duty towards the remainder. This is the master-key to unlock the field of industry in Ireland. The seller, in all such cases, is incapable of making a proper use of the land. The purchaser, on the other hand, may safely be assumed to be an improver. It is a natural feeling in which almost all men indulge, and purchases of land are seldom made without a distinct view to further profitable investments in improvements. "To give every prudent facility for the transfer by sale of real property from man to man, by the adoption of a simple, cheap, and secure system of transfer, in lieu of the present barbarous, unsafe, and expensive system, so that real property could be bought and sold in Ireland with as much freedom and security as other property*," is, therefore, the object

although the object of the Courts is confined to getting in the Rents, improvements being seldom attempted. The condition of the people on these neglected, and with reference to their present state of cultivation, overpopulated estates, is melancholy in the extreme.

* "Observations upon certain evils," &c.

at which we ought to aim, and especially to encourage the investment of small capitals in the land, it being through the instrumentality of small capitalists chiefly that the country can be civilized and improved. "The purchasers would give extensive and permanent employment to numbers of people around them in carrying out that natural desire of man, the improvement of newly-acquired landed property; they would promote industry everywhere; they would greatly increase the value of land generally. By their number, all property in land would be rendered secure against revolutionary violence. The habits and example of men who had made money by industry, and who might invest their savings in land, would place the social system of Ireland on a solid basis. The best of the Protestants and Roman Catholics, those who had been careful and industrious, would be purchasers of land, and all would have a common interest in peace and order. That surplus population beyond the means of present employment, which now oppresses and embarrasses the country, might gradually be absorbed, and become a source of wealth and strength. Towns would everywhere improve, and new ones might arise

by the extension of the railway system, spreading industry and civilization among men now sunk in indolence and almost barbarism*.”

All the parties concerned in these transfers would be benefited by them. Lands are comparatively valueless to those who have no capital to improve them, and they are often justly felt to be a burthen and a disgrace, because they entail duties which the nominal owners have no means of performing. The effect on the character and prospects of the whole body of landed proprietors would be as described in the following passage from the author to whom we are already so much indebted: “When men, however young, act under responsibility, they usually proceed with caution; if others will think and act for them, and provide for their wants, and secure them from poverty and danger, their own prudential faculties may become dormant; and a man or any class of men so protected, are likely to exhibit deficiency in the qualities of prudence and good management of their affairs. But owners of land would not evince any such deficiency, if once

* “Observations upon certain evils,” &c.

they felt that they would be ruined, and their families also, if they were not governed by the same rules of prudence which other men must observe, and which necessarily enter into the proper management of all other descriptions of property. The present difficulties of sale of land, and the consequent protection afforded to entailed properties, are the chief reasons why so many persons of the class of proprietors are in difficulties. With more liberty, there would be more prudence and more attention to estates on the part of owners, from which they and the country would be great gainers*."

The manner in which the interests of the public at large are affected, is correctly described in the following passage from the other pamphlet: "If these premises be correct; if employment with regular wages must be found for the peasantry: if capital be necessary, and the parties holding the land do not possess sufficient for this purpose; it follows, either that Government must continue to supply the capital required, not merely by a loan on an emergency, but as part of its regular system of action; or else

* "Observations upon certain evils," &c.

that the land must pass into the hands of those who do possess the means of employing the 'people—of men who will carry on agriculture as a business, and will bring to their occupation the capital, the habits of business, and the energy and intelligence which have raised the commerce and manufactures of this nation to their present pre-eminence*.”

Her Majesty's Government being deeply impressed with the importance of these views, introduced a bill into Parliament in the session of 1847, the object of which was to enable the owners of encumbered estates in Ireland to sell the whole or a portion of them, after the circumstances of each estate had been investigated by a Master in Chancery with a view to secure the due liquidation of every claim upon it. The sale was not to take place without the consent of the first incumbrancer, unless the Court of Chancery should consider the produce sufficient to pay the principal and all arrears of interest, or unless the owner or some subsequent incumbrancer should undertake to pay to the first incumbrancer any deficiency

* “Observations on the evils resulting to Ireland,” &c.

which might exist, and give such security for the performance of his undertaking as the court might direct. This bill passed the House of Lords, but was withdrawn in the Commons, owing to the opposition of some of the Irish proprietors, and to objections entertained by the great Insurance Companies, who are the principal lenders on Irish mortgages, to having their investments disturbed. The failure of the bill was a national misfortune which cannot be too soon remedied.

The Government, however, did what was in its power. A system has existed in Ireland since the time of Queen Anne for the registration of all deeds affecting landed property; and of late years a similar registration has been established of all judgments relating to that description of property. The attention of the Lord Lieutenant has been called to the practicability of diminishing the delay and expense attending transfers of landed property, by the adoption of two simple practical measures, viz., that when searches have been made in the office of the Registrar of Deeds, copies should be recorded in the office, as well as given to the parties on whose behalf they are made; and that when

judgments, &c., recorded in the office of the Registrar of Judgments have been satisfied, notice should be immediately sent to the Registrar, in order that such satisfaction may be recorded in the books of his office*. The consequence of the neglect of the first of these obvious precautions was, that, after expensive searches had been made in the Registry Office, the same searches often had to be made again and again, at the same expense, at the instance of other parties, however limited the transactions might be for the security of which these inquiries into past transfers and incumbrances were made; and the consequence of the neglect of the other precaution was, that if, after a search had been made through the records deposited in the office of the Registrar of Judgments, to ascertain whether any judgment had been passed against the estate, it appeared that any such judgment had been given, another search had to be made in the courts of law, involving fresh loss of time and fresh expense, to ascertain whether it had been satisfied†.

* Treasury Minute, October 15, 1847.

† These useful reforms were suggested by Mr. Pierce Mahony, who is entitled to the gratitude of the public, for the perseverance and ability with which he has, for

But it is time that we should resume our narrative.

The potato disease, which had manifested itself in North America in 1844*, first appeared in these islands late in the autumn of 1845. The early crop of potatoes, which is generally about one-sixth of the whole, and is dug in September and October, escaped; but the late, or what is commonly called the "people's crop," and is taken up in December and January, was tainted after it arrived at an advanced stage of maturity. When the disease had once commenced, it made steady progress, and it was often found, on opening the pits, that the potatoes had become a mass of rottenness. Nevertheless, this year the attack was partial; and although few parts of the country entirely escaped, and the destruction of human food was, on the whole, very great, a considerable portion of

many years past, with little encouragement either from the public or from those who have administered the Government of the country, advocated these and other measures directed to the extremely important object of simplifying, facilitating, and rendering more secure the transfer and tenure of land.

* The year 1845 was the second and worst in America; and in 1846, although it still extensively prevailed, the disease was of a milder type and only partially affected the crop.

the crop, which had been a more than usually large one, was saved. The wheat crop was a full average; oats and barley were abundant; and of turnips, carrots, and green crops, including a plentiful hay harvest, there was a more than sufficient supply. On the Continent, the rye crops failed partially, and the potato disease was very destructive in Holland, Belgium, France, and the west of Germany.

In the following year (1846) the blight in the potatoes took place earlier, and was of a much more sweeping and decisive kind. "On the 27th of last month (July), I passed," Father Mathew writes in a letter published in the Parliamentary Papers, "from Cork to Dublin, and this doomed plant bloomed in all the luxuriance of an abundant harvest. Returning on the 3rd instant (August), I beheld with sorrow one wide waste of putrefying vegetation. In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands, and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless." The first symptom of the disease was a little brown spot on the leaf, and these spots gradually increased in number and size, until

the foliage withered and the stem became brittle, and snapped off immediately when touched. In less than a week the whole process was accomplished*. The fields assumed a blackened appearance, as if they had been burnt up, and the growth of the potatoes was arrested when they were not larger than a marble or a pigeon's egg. No potatoes were pitted this year. In many districts where they had been most abundant, full-grown wholesome potatoes were

* The following extract from Captain Mann's Narrative, descriptive of what took place at this period in the county of Clare, will be read with interest: "The early culture of 1846 was in no way improved; a great proportion of the land was again tilled with potatoes, under the expectation that, as in former years, the late scarcity would be followed by a bountiful supply. The first alarm was in the latter part of July, when the potatoes showed symptoms of the previous year's disease; but I shall never forget the change in one week in August. On the first occasion, on an official visit of inspection, I had passed over thirty-two miles thickly studded with potato fields in full bloom. The next time the face of the whole country was changed; the stalk remained bright green, but the leaves were all scorched black. It was the work of a night. Distress and fear was pictured in every countenance, and there was a general rush to dig and sell, or consume the crop by feeding pigs and cattle, fearing in a short time they would prove unfit for any use. Consequently there was a very wasteful expenditure, and distress showed itself much earlier than in the preceding season."

not to be procured; and even in London and other large towns, they were sold at fancy prices, and were consumed as a luxury by the wealthy, rice and other substitutes being had recourse to by the body of the people. The crop of wheat this year was barely an average one, while barley and oats, and particularly the former, were decidedly deficient. On the Continent, the rye and potato crops again failed, and prices rose early in the season above those ruling in England, which caused the shipments from the Black Sea, Turkey and Egypt, to be sent to France, Italy, and Belgium; and it was not till late in the season, that our prices rose to a point which turned the current of supplies towards England and Ireland. The Indian corn crop in the United States this year was very abundant, and it became a resource of the utmost value to this country.

In the third year (1847) the disease had nearly exhausted itself. It appeared in different parts of the country, but the plants generally exerted fresh vigour and outgrew it. The result, perhaps, could not have been better. The wholesome distrust in the potato was maintained, while time was allowed for

making the alterations which the new state of things required. Although the potatoes sown in Ireland in the year 1847 were estimated only at 1-5th or 1-6th of the usual quantity, it would have been a serious aggravation of the difficulties and discouragements under which that portion of the empire was suffering, if the disease had reappeared in its unmitigated form. The crops of wheat, barley, and oats, in almost every part of the United Kingdom, and in most of the neighbouring countries on the Continent, were this year, to use the epithet generally applied to them, magnificent; and it became more and more apparent on the brink of what a precipice we had been standing, as the unusually small remaining stock of old corn came to light, and the exhausted and embarrassed state to which every description of business had been reduced, notwithstanding the advantage of a good harvest, gradually declared itself.

Among the numerous causes which enhanced the difficulty of obtaining adequate foreign supplies at moderate rates during the most exigent period of the winter of 1846-7, one of the most embarrassing, was the sudden and extraordinary advance in

freights, which occurred simultaneously in the ports of the United States of America, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea. Vessels were not obtainable in the Black Sea and the Danube at less than 18*s.* and 22*s.* per quarter for corn, whereas the usual rates are 9*s.* and 11*s.*; while in the United States, where large shipments of grain, flour, and Indian corn, were going forward to Europe, the comparatively limited number of vessels caused the rates to run up to 9*s.* per barrel for flour, and 16*s.* and 18*s.* per quarter for Indian corn to British ports, the rates usually given being 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per barrel of flour, and 8*s.* and 9*s.* per quarter for Indian corn.

On the 27th January, 1846, Sir Robert Peel proposed his measure for the relaxation of the duties on the importation of foreign corn, by which the scale of duties payable on wheat was to range from 4*s.* to 10*s.* per quarter, and Indian corn, which had previously been charged with the same duty as barley, was to pay only 1*s.* a-quarter. This was to last till February 1849, when an uniform duty of 1*s.* a-quarter was to be charged on every description of grain. The bill passed the House of Lords on the 29th

June, 1846; and Sir R. Peel announced his resignation in the House of Commons on the same day.

Immediately on the meeting of Parliament in January, 1847, Lord J. Russell introduced bills to suspend until the 1st September, 1847, the duties on foreign corn, and the restrictions imposed by the Navigation Laws on the importation of corn in foreign vessels; and he at the same time moved a resolution permitting the use of sugar in breweries; all which measures received the sanction of the Legislature. At the close of the same session, the suspension of the Corn and Navigation Laws was extended to the 1st March, 1848.

On the first appearance of the blight in the autumn of 1845, Professors Kane, Lindley, and Playfair, were appointed by Sir Robert Peel to inquire into the nature of it, and to suggest the best means of preserving the stock of potatoes from its ravages. The result showed that the mischief lay beyond the knowledge and power of man. Every remedy which science or experience could dictate was had recourse to, but the potato equally melted away under the most opposite modes of treatment.

The next step was to order from the United States of America 100,000*l.* worth of Indian corn. It was considered that the void caused by the failure of the potato crop might be filled, with the least disturbance of private trade and market prices, by the introduction of a new description of popular food. Owing to the prohibitory duty, Indian corn was unknown as an article of consumption in the United Kingdom*. Private

* The following extract from Captain Mann's Narrative will give some idea of the difficulty of prevailing on the people to have recourse to the new food :—"The first issue of Indian corn meal was in March, 1846. It is impossible to conceive the strong prejudice against it; and I may here bear testimony to the benevolent and right feeling of the Rev. J. Kenny, P. P. Previously to the sale of the meal being commenced, a small portion was sent to me by Commissary-General (now Sir Edward) Coffin, which I placed in the hands of the reverend gentleman. He tried and approved of it, and in order to overcome any feeling against it, subsequently, with his two curates, all but entirely lived on the meal made into bread and stirabout, for nearly a fortnight using all his influence to convince the people that the pernicious effects ascribed to it were untrue. Such conduct is above any praise of mine. The success attending this measure, it is quite unnecessary for me to allude to; and the merchants profiting by the example, commenced a trade new to them by importing the article." The use of Indian corn meal was adopted in hundreds of households of the higher classes, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, besides that of Father Kenny, for the purpose of over-

merchants, therefore, could not complain of interference with a trade which did not exist, nor could prices be raised against the home consumer on an article of which no stock was to be found in the home market. Nevertheless, with a view to avoid as long as possible, the doubts and apprehensions which must have arisen if the Government had appeared as a purchaser in a new class of operations, pains were taken to keep the transaction secret, and the first cargoes from America had been more than a fortnight in Cork harbour before it became generally known that such a measure was in progress.

coming the popular prejudice by the force of example. The Society of Arts awarded a gold medal to Mr. O'Brien, baker, of Leinster Street, Dublin, for the attention paid by him to the introduction of cheap popular modes of preparing Indian corn for use; and tens of thousands of pamphlets and printed sheets were distributed through the Commissariat containing instructions for cooking the Indian corn, and showing the people what other cheap descriptions of food were available to them. Those who know how difficult it is to induce a large population to adopt new habits, will be surprised at the success which attended these efforts. The "yellow meal," as it is called, was first known as "Peel's brimstone," and it was remembered that the attempt to introduce it in a former season of distress occasioned a popular commotion, arising from the absurd notion that it had the effect of turning those who ate it black.

In order to distribute the food so obtained, central depôts were established in various parts of Ireland, under the direction of officers of the Commissariat, with sub-depôts under the charge of the Constabulary and Coast Guard; and, when the supplies in the local markets were deficient, meal was sold from these depôts at reasonable prices to Relief Committees, where any existed, and where they did not, to the labourers themselves. In the time of the heaviest pressure (June and July 1846), one sub-depôt retailed 20 tons of meal daily, and the issues from a single main depôt to its dependencies amounted to 233 tons in one week.

The Relief Committees were formed, under the superintendence of a Central Commission at Dublin, for the purpose of selling food in detail to those who could buy it, and of giving it to those who could not; the requisite funds being derived from private subscriptions, added to, in certain proportions, by Government donations. The Relief Committees also selected the persons to be employed on the Relief Works carried on under the superintendence of the Board of Works.

If the Irish poor had been in the habit of

buying their food, as is the case in England, the object would have been attained when a cheap substitute had been provided for the potato ; but as the labouring class in Ireland had hitherto subsisted on potatoes grown by themselves, and money-wages were almost unknown, it was necessary to adopt some means of giving the people a command over the new description of food. This was done by establishing a system of public works, in accordance with the previous practice on similar occasions, both in Ireland and in other countries.

These works, which consisted principally of roads, were undertaken on the application of the magistrates and principal cess-payers, under the Act 9 & 10 Vic., c. 1, which was passed for the purpose, and the expense of executing them was defrayed by advances of public money, half of which was a grant, and half a loan to be repaid by the barony. The largest number of persons employed in this first season of relief was 97,000, in August, 1846.

The first symptoms of neglected tillage appeared in the Spring of 1846, and they were worst in those districts in which the Relief Works were carried on to the greatest

extent. The improvements in progress on the Shannon and the arterial drainages were also impeded by the preference which the labourers showed for the Relief Works.

The measures of which we have been speaking were brought to a close on the 15th August, 1846, and they may be considered to have answered their end. The scarcity being partial and local, the deficiency of one part of the country was supplied from the superabundance of others, and the pains taken to prevent the people from suffering want, led to their being better off than in ordinary years. Above all, Ireland was prepared by the course adopted during this probationary season of distress, as it may be called, to bear better the heavy affliction of the succeeding season. No misapplication of the funds deserving of notice took place, except in the instance of the Relief Works, the cause of which was as follows:—The landed proprietors of Ireland had long been accustomed to rely upon Government loans and grants for making improvements of various kinds, and the terms on which the Relief Works were to be executed being more advantageous than any which had been open to them for many years before, a rush took

place from all quarters upon this fund, and the special object of relieving the people from the consequences of the failure of their accustomed food, was to a great extent lost sight of in the general fear, which in many cases was not attempted to be concealed, of being deprived of what the persons interested called "their share of the grant." This description of relief, therefore, instead of acting as a test of real distress, operated as a bounty on applications for public works from a class of persons who were at once charged with the administration of the relief and were interested in the execution of the works. The result was that, while the applications amounted to 1,289,816*l.*, the sum actually sanctioned and expended was only 476,000*l.*, and great part even of this was merely yielded to the distressing appeals pressed on the Lord Lieutenant on the plea of urgent local destitution, and of the lamentable consequences to be expected from allowing it to remain unrelieved. The other expenses connected with this season of relief were as follows:—Loans on grand jury presentments, 130,000*l.*; loss on the purchase and sale of grain, 50,000*l.*; given in aid of Relief Committees, 69,845*l.*; extra staff of the Board of Works, 7,527*l.*;

thus making the whole sum expended in relief to Ireland, up to the 15th August, 1846, 733,372*l.*, of which 368,000*l.* was in loans, and 365,372*l.* in grants. The sum raised by voluntary subscription through the Relief Committees was 98,000*l.*

The new and more decisive failure of the potato crop called for great exertions from Lord John Russell's recently formed Government, and the plan resolved upon was explained in the Treasury Minute dated the 31st August, 1846, which was published for general information*.

The system of public works was renewed by the Act 9 & 10 Vic., c. 107, which was passed without any opposition in either House of Parliament. In order to check the exorbitant demands which had been made during the preceding season, the whole of the expense was made a local charge, and the advances were directed to be repaid by a rate levied according to the Poor Law valuation, which makes the landlords liable for the whole rate on tenements under 4*l.* yearly value, and for a proportion, generally

* This minute will be found from pages 67 to 71 of the first Board of Works Series of Parliamentary Papers for 1847.

amounting to one-half, on tenements above that value, instead of according to the grand jury cess (the basis of the repayments under the preceding Act), which lays the whole burden upon the occupier. It was also determined that the wages given on the Relief Works should be somewhat below the average rate of wages in the district; that the persons employed, should, as far as possible, be paid by task or in proportion to the work actually done by them; and that the Relief Committees, instead of giving tickets entitling persons to employment on the public works, should furnish lists of persons requiring relief, which should be carefully revised by the officers of the Board of Works; the experience of the preceding season having shown that these precautions were necessary to confine the Relief Works to the destitute, and to enforce a reasonable quantum of work.

The question which the Government had to decide, in regard to the renewal of the Commissariat operations, was of the most momentous kind. After all that had taken place during the last few months, it could not be expected that private trade would return, as a matter of course, to its ac-

customed channels. Neither the wholesale dealers in towns, nor the retail dealers in the rural districts, would lay in even their usual stocks of food ; still less would they make the extraordinary provision required to meet the coming emergency, while they had before them the prospect of the Government throwing into the market supplies of food of unknown extent, which might make their outlay so much loss to them. The Government could not, therefore, calculate, as it did on the former occasion, on finding the private trade, by means of which the people are ordinarily supplied with food, proceeding as usual, and on being able to add more or less, at its discretion, to the resources which that trade afforded. Mercantile confidence in this branch of business was, for the time, destroyed. The trade was paralysed ; and if this state of things had been suffered to continue, the general expectation of the Government again interfering would inevitably have created a necessity for that interference, on a scale which it would have been quite beyond the power of the Government to support.

Under these circumstances it was announced,—1st. That no orders for supplies

of food would be sent by the Government to foreign countries. 2ndly. That the interference of the Government would be confined to those western districts of Ireland in which, owing to the former prevalence of potato cultivation, no trade in corn for local consumption existed. And 3rdly. That even in these districts, the Government depôts would not be opened for the sale of food, while it could be obtained from private dealers at reasonable prices, with reference to those which prevailed at the nearest large marts. It was also determined to adhere to the rule acted upon during the preceding season, not to make any purchases in the local markets of Ireland, where the appearance of the Government as a buyer must have had the effect of keeping up prices and encouraging interested representations; and a promise was given that every practicable effort would be made to protect the supplies of food introduced by private traders, both while they were in transit and when they were stored for future consumption.

The Relief Committees of the preceding season were re-organised; the rules under which they had acted were carefully revised;

and inspecting officers were appointed to superintend their proceedings, and keep the Government informed of the progress of events. A large proportion of the people of Ireland had been accustomed to grow the food they required, each for himself, on his own little plot of ground; and the social machinery by which, in other countries, the necessary supplies of food are collected, stored, and distributed, had no existence there. Suddenly, without any preparation, the people passed from a potato food, which they raised themselves, to a grain food, which they had to purchase from others, and which, in great part, had to be imported from abroad; and the country was so entirely destitute of the resources applicable to this new state of things, that often, even in large villages, neither bread nor flour was to be procured; and in country districts, the people had sometimes to walk twenty miles before they could obtain a single stone of meal. The main object for which the Relief Committees were established, therefore, was to provide a temporary substitute for the operations of the corn-factor, miller, baker, and provision-dealer, and to allow time and furnish the example for a sounder and more

permanent state of things; but they were not precluded from giving gratuitous relief in cases of more than ordinary destitution. The agency of Relief Committees was this season almost universally substituted for the coast guard and constabulary depôts with the object of drawing out the resources of the country before the Government depôts were had recourse to, of inducing the upper and middle classes to exert themselves, and of preventing a direct pressure of the mass of the people upon the Government depôts, which in a time of real famine it would have been very difficult to resist.

Such was the plan resolved upon for the campaign of 1846-7 against the approaching famine, and we shall now show the result of the struggle.

It was hoped that a breathing-time would have been allowed at the season of harvest, to enable the Board of Works to reorganize their establishments on a scale proportioned to the magnitude of the task about to devolve on them, and to prepare, through their district officers, plans and estimates of suitable works for the assistance of the baronial sessions. This interval was not obtained. The general failure of the potato

crop spread despondency and alarm from one end of Ireland to the other, and induced every class of persons to throw themselves upon the Government for aid. On the 6th of September, the Lord Lieutenant ordered all the discontinued works under the 9 & 10 Vic., c. 1, to be recommenced, and sessions were rapidly held in all the southern and western counties of Ireland, at which roads were presented in the mass, under the 9 & 10 Vic., c. 107, the cost of which, in some cases, much exceeded the annual rental of the barony. The resident gentry and rate-payers, whose duty it was to ascertain, as far as possible, the probable amount of destitution in their neighbourhood, the sum required to relieve it, and the works upon which that sum could best be expended, and who had the necessary local knowledge, in almost every case devolved these functions upon the Board of Works, who could only act on such information as they could obtain from naval and military officers and engineers, most of whom were selected from among strangers to the district, in order to prevent undue influence being used. After that, to advance the funds; to select the labourers; to superintend the work; to pay

the people weekly; to enforce proper performance of the labour; if the farm works were interrupted, to ascertain the quantity of labour required for them; to select and draft off the proper persons to perform it; to settle the wages to be paid to them by the farmers, and see that they were paid; to furnish food, not only for all the destitute out of doors, but in some measure for the paupers in the workhouses, were the duties which the Government and its officers were called upon to perform. The proprietors and associated rate-payers having presented *indefinitely*, said it was the fault of the Government and its officers if the people were not instantly employed, and these officers were blamed, even by persons of character and understanding, if they were not at once equal to execute the duties which in this country are performed in their respective districts by thousands of country gentlemen, magistrates, guardians, overseers, surveyors, &c., resident throughout the country, and trained by the experience of years to the performance of their various functions. The Board of Works became the centre of a colossal organization; 5,000 separate works had to be reported upon;

12,000 subordinate officers had to be superintended. Their letters averaged upwards of 800 a-day, and the number received on each of the following days was—

January 4th,	-	3,104
February 15th,	-	4,900
April 19th,	-	4,340
May 17th, -	-	6,033*

The strain on the springs of society from this monstrous system of centralisation was fearful in the extreme. The Government, which ought only to mediate between the different classes of society, had now to bear the immediate pressure of the millions, on the sensitive points of wages and food. The opposition to task-work was general, and the enforcement of it became a trial of strength between the Government and the multitude. The officers of the Board were in numerous instances the objects of murderous attacks, and it became necessary for

* A member of the Board of Works, writing to a friend, observed as follows:—"I hope never to see such a winter and spring again. I can truly say, in looking back upon it, even now, that it appears to me, not a succession of weeks and days, but one long continuous day, with occasional intervals of nightmare sleep. Rest one could never have, night nor day, when one felt that in every minute lost a score of men might die."

the preservation of the whole community, to have recourse to the painful expedient of stopping the works whenever cases of insubordination or outrage occurred.

Meanwhile, the number of persons employed on the works was rapidly on the increase. The utmost exertions of two sets of inspecting officers, one under the Board of Works, and the other under Sir R. Routh, were insufficient to revise the lists; and the Lord Lieutenant in vain directed that no person rated above 6*l.* for the Poor Law cess, should, except under very special circumstances, be eligible for employment. Thousands upon thousands were pressed upon the officers of the Board of Works in every part of Ireland, and it was impossible for those officers to test the accuracy of the urgent representations which were made to them. The attraction of money wages regularly paid from the public purse, or the "Queen's pay," as it was popularly called, led to a general abandonment of other descriptions of industry, in order to participate in the advantages of the Relief Works. Landlords competed with each other in getting the names of their tenants placed on the lists; farmers dismissed their labourers

and sent them to the works; the clergy insisted on the claims of the members of their respective congregations; the fisheries were deserted; and it was often difficult even to get a coat patched or a pair of shoes mended, to such an extent had the population of the south and west of Ireland turned out upon the roads. The average number employed in October was 114,000; in November, 285,000; in December, 440,000; and in January, 1847, 570,000. It was impossible to exact from such multitudes a degree of labour which would act as a test of destitution. Huddled together in masses, they contributed to each other's idleness, and there were no means of knowing who did a fair proportion of work and who did not. The general enforcement of the system of task work had justly been considered necessary to stimulate the industry of the labourers on the Relief Works, but when this point had been carried, after a hard struggle, the old abuse reappeared in the aggravated form of an habitual collusion between the labourers and the overseers who were appointed to measure their work; so that the labourers, if they could be so called, were not only as idle as ever, but were en-

abled withal to enjoy a rate of wages which ought only to have been the reward of superior industry.

The plan of the Labour Rate Act (9 & 10 Vic., c. 107) was based on the supposition that the great majority of the landlords and farmers would make those exertions and submit to those sacrifices which the magnitude of the crisis demanded, leaving only a manageable proportion of the population to be supported by the Board of Works; and the Act would probably have answered its object, if a larger, instead of a smaller number of persons than usual had been employed in the cultivation and improvement of the land, and the Relief Committees had put only those who were really destitute upon the lists. Including the families of the persons employed, upwards of two millions of people were maintained by the Relief Works, but there were other multitudes behind, including often the most helpless portion of the community, for whom no work could be found. The Relief Works did not always furnish a subsistence even for those who were employed on them. The wages, paid regularly in money, were higher than any which had ever been given

for agricultural labour in Ireland, but at the existing prices of food they were insufficient for the support of a family, melancholy proof of which was afforded by daily instances of starvation in connexion with the Relief Works*. The fearful extent to which the rural population had been thrown for support upon the Board of Works also threatened a disastrous neglect of the ordinary tillage. If the people were retained on the works, their lands must remain unculti-

* An officer of the Board of Works, observing the emaciated condition of the labourers, reported that, as an engineer, he was ashamed of allotting so little task-work for a day's wages, while, as a man, he was ashamed of requiring so much. In some districts proof of attendance was obliged to be considered sufficient to entitle the labourer to his wages. The exhausted state of the workmen was one main cause of the small quantity of work done compared with the money expended. The Irish peasant had been accustomed to remain at home, cowering over his turf fire, during the inclement season of the year, and exposure to the cold and rain on the roads, without sufficient food or clothing, greatly contributed to the prevailing sickness. In order to obviate this as far as possible, a Circular Letter was issued by the Board of Works (1st series of 1847, page 499) directing that, in case of snow or heavy rain, the labourers should merely attend roll call in the morning, and be entered on the pay list for half a day's pay; and if it afterwards became fine, they were to come to work, which would entitle them to a further allowance.

vated; if they were put off the works, they must starve. A change of system had become inevitable, and when Parliament met in the end of January, it was announced that the Government intended to put an end to the Public Works, and to substitute for them another mode of relief, which will be hereafter described.

Meanwhile, the pressure on the Relief Works was continually on the increase, and the persons daily employed, who in January had been 570,000, became in February 708,000, and in March amounted to the enormous number of 734,000*, represent-

* In this month (March) the expenditure upon the Relief Works was heaviest, viz. :—

Labour and Plant	£1,024,518
Extra Staff	26,254

Per Month £1,050,772

In the Week ending 13 March, 1847,
the expenditure for all the above
services was £259,105

which gives a Daily average for
that week 43,184

On the 5th March there was remitted
into the interior for carrying on
Relief Works 68,000

On the 30th March, only . . 16,000

These two are the extremes during the month.

The mean (for the month) of daily
remittance 38,920

ing, at a moderate estimate of the average extent of each family, upwards of three millions of persons. At last, the Government, seeing that the time suited for agricultural operations was rapidly passing away, and that the utmost exertions made on the spot had failed in keeping the numbers in check, took the matter into its own hands, and directed that on the 20th March, 20 per cent. of the persons employed should be struck off the lists ; after which, successive reductions were ordered, proportioned to the progress made in bringing the new system of relief into operation in each district. These orders were obeyed, and the crisis passed without any disturbance of the public peace or any perceptible aggravation of the distress. The necessary labour was returned to agriculture, and the foundation was laid of the late abundant harvest in Ireland, by which the downward progress of that country has been mercifully stayed, and new strength and spirits have been given for working out her regeneration. In the first week in April, the persons employed on the Relief Works were reduced to 525,000 ; in the first week in May to 419,000 ; in the first week in June to 101,000 ; and in the week ending

the 26th June to 28,000. The remaining expenditure was limited to a sum of 200,000*l.* for the month of May, and to the rate of 100,000*l.* a-month for June, July, and the first fifteen days of August, when the Act expired. These sums were afterwards permitted to be exceeded to a certain extent, but the object was attained of putting a curb on this monstrous system and of bringing it gradually and quietly to a close. Great exertions were made, and a heavy expense was incurred, to leave the roads and other works in progress in a safe and passable state as far as they had gone; but their completion must depend upon the parties locally interested in them. From the first commencement of the Relief Works in February 1846, repeated warnings were given that the object was not the works themselves, but the relief of the prevailing destitution through the employment afforded by them; that the works would be closed as soon as they were no longer required for that purpose; and that if the proprietors desired to complete them, they might do so under the ordinary system of Government loans made on the security of county presentments*.

* The proceedings of the Government, in reference to

This system threw off a shoot, the history of which it is necessary to trace. In order to impose some limits on what threatened to become a gigantic system of permanently supporting one portion of the community at the expense of the remainder, and of making provision out of the taxes for classes of undertakings which properly belong to the economy of private life, the application of the public money under the Labour Rate Acts was strictly limited to works of a public character, which were not likely to be undertaken except for the purpose of giving relief. This condition was generally objected to in Ireland; and although no disposition was evinced to take advantage of the loans which the Government was ready to make under the General Improvement and Drainage Acts, a great desire was expressed that the funds advanced under the Labour Rate Act should be employed on what were called reproductive works. The Lord Lieutenant, having obtained the sanction of the Government, yielded to this general feeling, and

this point, are fully explained in a letter from Mr. Trevelyan to Colonel Jones, and in the accompanying Treasury Minute, printed in the first Board of Works Series for 1847, page 97 to 100.

authorized presentments to be made for the drainage and subsoiling of the estates of individuals, provided they consented to their estates being charged with the repayment of the sums advanced. This was the arrangement which acquired so much notoriety under the name of "Labouchere's Letter," owing to its having been announced by the publication of a letter from Mr. Labouchere, who then held the office of Secretary for Ireland, to the Board of Works, dated 5th October, 1846; but the result did not answer the expectations which had been formed. The aggregate amount presented "under the Letter," was 380,607*l.*, of which presentments were acted on to the gross amount of 239,476*l.* The sum actually expended was about 180,000*l.*; and the largest number of persons at any one time employed was 26,961 in the month of May, 1847. Some incidental good was done by the example of the advantages of thorough draining, and of the proper mode of executing it; but, as a remedy for the wide-spread calaninity, the plan totally failed.

Upon this, a two-fold agitation sprang up. Some landed proprietors required that their liability should be confined to the relief of

the destitute on their own estates; while others demanded that, instead of being employed on the roads, the people should be paid for working on their own farms. Both these movements were steadily resisted by the Government. The objection to the first was, that if the inhabitants of the pauperised districts had been separated from the rest in the administration of the measures of relief, they must either have starved or have become entirely dependent on the Consolidated Fund; while, if the other plan had been adopted, the entire cost of carrying on the agriculture of the country would have been transferred to the Government, without its being possible either to test the applications for assistance, or to enforce a proper amount of exertion. This last scheme was most clamorously urged in the county of Clare, and it may be considered as the masterpiece of that system of social economy according to which the machine of society should be worked backwards, and the Government should be made to support the people, instead of the people the Government. The Government was also to provide tools and seed as well as wages, but the rent was to be received by the same parties as before.

Baronial presentments were authorized for the construction of railway earthworks, as relief works under the 9 & 10 Vic., c. 107, subject to the conditions required for the fulfilment of the object of the Act*; but advantage was taken of this permission only in two baronies of the county of Cork, where the Waterford and Limerick Railway was aided from this source.

The silver currency which had previously sufficed for a people who lived upon potatoes grown by themselves, and paid their rent by so many days' labour, fell short of what was required to pay the labourers employed on the numerous Relief Works carried on simultaneously in different parts of the country, and a large supply was therefore distributed, by means of a Government steamer, among the principal towns on the coast of Ireland. On the cessation of the Relief Works, the greater part of this coin accumulated in the banks, which were relieved by the transmission of the surplus to the Cape of Good Hope to aid in carrying on the Caffre war.

In the Commissariat branch of the opera-

* See page 44 of the first Board of Works Series of 1847.

tions, every pledge which had been given was strictly adhered to, and confidence having been re-established, prodigious efforts were made by the mercantile community to provide against the approaching scarcity. The whole world was ransacked for supplies; Indian corn, the taste for which had by this time taken root in Ireland, rose to a higher price than wheat; and the London and Liverpool markets were again and again swept by the enterprising operations of the Irish dealers, who, from an early period, appreciated the full extent of the calamity, and acted upon the principle that the gulf which had opened in Ireland would swallow all that could be thrown into it, and remain still unsatisfied. In February 1847, the beneficial effect of these measures began to be apparent. On the 24th of that month, Mr. N. Cummins, a respectable merchant of Cork, wrote as follows to Mr. Trevelyan :

“From this gloomy picture I turn to the supply of food, and am happy to say that in this quarter the importations, both direct and from England, during the past month, have been very large; heavy cargoes of maize continue almost daily to arrive, and I feel persuaded that the stocks of bread stuffs generally are accumulating here to a

much larger amount than some of our dealers would have it believed. Prices cannot, however, be quoted at more than a turn below the extreme point yet; they stand as follows,—say Indian corn, by retail, 17*l.* 15*s.* and 18*l.* per ton; Indian meal to 19*l.*; oatmeal, 25*l.*; wheaten meal, 19*l.* to 20*l.* per ton.”

On the 12th March, the same gentleman wrote,—

“Our market for Indian corn seems at length quite glutted, the arrivals within the last few days having been so extremely numerous, that the trade is unable to take off the supply, or indeed to find sufficient stowage in the city. Several cargoes for discharge here are at this moment lying under demurrage, and I may quote the article 15*s.* to 20*s.* per ton cheaper than a fortnight since.”

And on the 19th,—

“There are at present over 100 sail, containing an aggregate amount of bread stuffs not short of 20,000 tons, afloat in our harbour; and maize, which a month since brought freely 18*l.* per ton, is this day offered in small parcels at 15*l.*”

And on the same day Father Matthew wrote to Mr. Trevelyan as follows :—


“For the first time since the Lord visited this

unhappy land with famine, I address you with delight. The markets are rapidly falling; Indian corn from 16*l.* to 15*l.* per ton. The vast importations, and the still more vast exportations from America, have produced this blessed effect."

On the 26th March, Mr. Cummins states—

"I have now to report the continuance each day of numerous arrivals of food cargoes here; the additional number during the present week (mostly maize laden) considerably exceeds 100 sail, several being American ships of large burthen; and although many have proceeded to other ports, the number afloat, waiting orders or sale, has been fully doubled. I cannot estimate the fleet this day in our harbours at less than 250 sail; nor the contents at much under 50,000 tons. Indian corn may be purchased at 14*l.* by the cargo, and retailed at 15*l.* per ton."

It now began to be perceived that more was to be expected from the collective exertions of the merchants of the United Kingdom, than from the Admiralty or the Commissariat. The whole quantity of corn imported into Ireland in the first six months of 1847 was 2,849,508 qrs., which was worth, at the then current prices, 8,764,943*l.*; and the Irish market was, to use the words



of the present Lord Lieutenant, "freer, cheaper, and better supplied, than that of any country in Europe where distress prevailed, and where those measures of interference and restriction had been unwisely adopted which were successfully resisted here." The price of Indian corn, which in the middle of February had been 19*l.* a-ton, was reduced at the end of March to 13*l.*, and at the end of August to 7*l.* 10*s.* a-ton; and such was the quantity of shipping which flocked to the United States on the first intelligence of the unusual demand for freight, that the rate for the conveyance of corn to the United Kingdom, which had been as high as 9*s.* per barrel during the winter months, was as low as 4*s.* 6*d.* in May, and has since fallen to 1*s.* 9*d.* It may safely be asserted that these results would not have been obtained, if the great body of our English and Irish merchants and shipowners, instead of having free scope given to their exertions, had been left under the discouraging impression that all their calculations might be upset by the sudden appearance in the foreign market, of Government vessels and Government orders for supplies. The noble harbour of

Cork was established as the house of call and entrepôt for the grain ships bound to every part of Western Europe; and the merchant being now free either to sell on the spot or to re-export, Ireland began to enjoy the benefit of her admirable commercial position, by getting the first, and largest, and cheapest supply.

Nevertheless, the public establishments were not idle. Upwards of 300,000 quarters of corn were purchased from time to time to supply the Government depôts on the western coast of Ireland*, and large stores

* The following shows the extent of the Government interference in the supply of food in the two seasons of 1845—46 and 1846—47 :—

	Reduced to general denomination of quarters,	Cost,
		£
Total quantity of Indian Corn and Oatmeal provided for the Relief Service during the first season of distress, up to August 1846 .	98,810	163,240
Of this quantity there remained in store at the close of the first season of the operations	14,575	24,073
Total quantity of provisions of all kinds (Indian Corn, Wheat, Barley, the meal of those grains, Ryemeal, Biscuit, Peas, Beans, and Rice) provided for the Relief Service, during the second season of distress up to September 1847	289,335	672,767
	303,910	696,840
There remained in store at the close of the second season of the operations, about .	108,960	249,836

of biscuit and salt meat, which had been laid up at the different military stations in the year 1843, in anticipation of popular disturbances arising out of the repeal movement, were now applied to the relief of the people. One of the consequences of the sudden change from a potato to a corn diet, was, that the means of grinding were seriously deficient. The powerful Admiralty mills at Deptford, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Malta, besides two large hired mills, were therefore constantly employed in grinding the corn bought by the Commissariat, leaving the mill-power of Ireland to the private importers of grain into that country; and hand-mills, on the principle of the old Irish Quern, were made for distribution in the most distressed districts; while others, constructed on an improved principle, were procured from France. Thirty-four large depôts were established on the western side of Ireland, from Dunfanaghy, in the most northern part of Donegal, to Skibbereen, in the south-west of the county of Cork: and the sales were made, as far as possible, to the Relief Committees, with the double object of drawing forth the resources and activity of the upper classes,

and of preventing an indiscriminate pressure upon the depôts, which it would have been difficult to resist. Several ships of war were moored in convenient situations and used as store-ships. The largest and most powerful war-steamers, reinforced, when the occasion required it, by sailing vessels, were appropriated to the conveyance of the meal from the mills in England to the depôts in Ireland, and every other available steamer, not excepting the Admiralty yacht, was employed in making the necessary transfers between the depôts, and in conveying the supplies which the Relief Committees had purchased.

The highest praise to which these great operations are entitled, is that they were carried through without any sensible disturbance of the ordinary course of trade, and that in some important respects they even gave new life and development to it. The purchases were all made in the home market, and care was taken never to give the highest current price. The sales were made at the wholesale price of the nearest large mart, with a reasonable addition for the cost of carriage, &c. When supplies

of food could be obtained elsewhere, the depôts were closed. Private merchants, therefore, imported largely in the face of the Government depôts; while, in the remote western districts, the Commissariat acted as pioneers to the ordinary trade, and led the way to habits of commercial enterprise where before they had no existence.

There was the same general pressure for the premature opening of the depôts as for the early commencement of Relief Works, but in this case it was successfully resisted. It was explained that the Government depôts were intended to be a last resource to supply the deficiencies of the trade, and not to take the place of that trade; and that if the depôts were opened while the country was still full of the produce of the late harvest, that produce would be exported before the spring supplies arrived from America and the Black Sea, and the population would become entirely dependent upon the depôts, which must, in that case, soon come to a discreditable and disastrous stop. Meanwhile, great exertions were made to protect the provision trade, and the troops and

constabulary were harassed by continual escorts. The plunder of bakers' shops and bread-carts, and the shooting of horses and breaking up of roads, to prevent the removal of provisions, were matters of daily occurrence; and at Limerick, Galway, and elsewhere, mobs prevented any articles of food from leaving the towns, while the country people resisted their being carried in. Convoys under military protection proceeded at stated intervals from place to place, without which nothing in the shape of food could be sent with safety.

As many as 1097 Relief Committees were established under the superintendence of the Commissariat; while 199,470l.* was sub-

* This was the amount of the private subscriptions upon which Government donations were made; but other large sums were raised by local Irish subscriptions, through the medium of some of the Relief Committees, of which no account was furnished to the Government, because the Committees concerned would not submit to the rule of selling at cost price except in cases of extreme destitution. Large funds were also administered by private individuals, quite independently of the Local Relief Committees; of which class of operations the following account of the expenditure of a Protestant clergyman in the south-west of Ireland, with a parish of 10,000 inhabitants, no resident gentry, not a single town in the whole of it, nor a

scribed by private individuals, and 189,914*l.* was granted by the Government (making together 389,384*l.*) in support of their operations.

One of the functions of these committees was to provide supplies of food for sale at the current market price; and when the rise of prices began to be seriously felt, the Government was called upon from every

road through the greater part of it, may be taken as a specimen:—

	£	s.	d.
Gratuitous aid of every sort . . .	306	6	0
Loss by sale of food under market price, when exorbitant . . .	208	9	0
Payment of labour—making road to the bog, and other public works	150	10	0
Seed—corn, wheat, oats, and barley	300	0	0
Turnip seed	15	0	0
Fishing materials	150	10	6
	<hr/>		
	£1,130	15	6

Funds of this sort administered by benevolent and public-spirited individuals in Ireland, were generally supplied by the exertions of their relations and friends, or by grants from societies in England and elsewhere. It was a common practice for ladies in England to have parishes assigned to them in Ireland, and each lady raised all she could, and made periodical remittances to the clergyman of her adopted parish, receiving accounts from him

part of Ireland to permit the grants of public money made to the committees to be employed in reducing the price of provisions to that of ordinary years. To this demand it was impossible for the Government to accede. In 1845-6 the scarcity was confined to a few districts of Ireland, while there was abundance everywhere else. The question, therefore, at that time, was a money one; and all that was required to relieve the distress, was to purchase a sufficient quantity of food elsewhere and to send it into the distressed districts. In 1846-7, on the contrary, the scarcity was general, extending over all Western Europe, and threatening a famine in other quarters besides Ireland. The present question, therefore, was not a money, but a food question. The entire stock of food for the whole United Kingdom was insufficient, and it was only by carefully husbanding it, that it could be made to last till harvest. If provisions had been cheapened out of the public purse, consumption would have

in return, of the manner in which the money was expended. The self-denial necessary to support this charitable drain was carried to such an extent at Brighton and elsewhere, that the confectioners and other tradespeople suffered severely in their business.

proceeded in a time of severe scarcity, at the same rate as in a time of moderate plenty; the already insufficient stock of food would have been expended with a frightful rapidity, and in order to obtain a few weeks of ease, we should have had to endure a desolating famine. Those Relief Committees which attempted to follow this plan speedily exhausted their capital; and private dealers (who necessarily lay in their stock at the current market price, whatever that may be) retired from the competition with public bodies selling food at prices artificially reduced by charitable subscriptions and grants out of national funds.

The other function of the Relief Committees was to give gratuitous aid in cases of extreme destitution, and this was well performed by them to the extent of their means. As the distress increased, the distribution of cooked food by the establishment of soup-kitchens was found the most effectual means of alleviating it. The attention of the committees was therefore generally directed to this object by the Inspecting Officers. Boilers were manufactured and sent to Ireland in great numbers, and Government donations were now in

every case made equal in amount to the private subscriptions ("pound for pound"), and in cases of more than usual pressure, twice or three times that amount was given. This mode of giving relief was not found to be attended with any serious abuse. The committees expended in a great measure their own money, which made them more careful in seeing that it was laid out with the greatest possible advantage and economy; and as the ration of cooked food distributed by them was not an object of desire to persons in comfortable circumstances, as money wages were, it acted in a great degree as a test of destitution. The defect of this system of relief was, that being voluntary, it could not be relied on to meet the necessities of a numerous population in a period of great emergency, and the difficulty of obtaining private subscriptions was often greatest in the most distressed districts.

The point at which we had arrived, therefore, at the commencement of the year 1847, was, that the system of Public Works, although recommended by the example of all former occasions on which relief had been afforded to the people of Ireland in seasons

of distress, had completely broken down under the pressure of this wide-spread calamity; while the other concurrent system, which, on the principle of the Poor Law, aimed at giving relief, in the most direct form, out of funds locally raised, had succeeded to the extent to which it had been tried. The works were therefore brought to a close in the manner which has been already described: and it was determined to complete the system of relief by the distribution of food, to give it legal validity, and to place it more decidedly on the basis of the Poor Law. This was done by the passing of the Act 10 Vic., c. 7. A Relief Committee, composed of the magistrates, one clergyman of each persuasion, the Poor Law guardian, and the three highest rate-payers, was constituted in each electoral division*, the unit of Irish Poor Law statistics. A Finance Committee, consisting of four gentlemen, carefully selected for their weight of character and knowledge of business, was formed to control the expenditure in each union. Inspecting Officers were appointed, most of

* Two electoral divisions were sometimes united under one Relief Committee, but the accounts of each electoral division were kept separate. 4

whom had been trained under the Board of Works and Sir R. Routh; and a Commission sitting in Dublin, of which Sir J. Burgoyne was the head, and the Poor Law Commissioner was one of the members, superintended the whole system. The expense was to be defrayed by payments made by the guardians out of the produce of the rates; and when this fund was insufficient, as it always proved to be, it was reinforced by Government loans, to be repaid by rates subsequently levied. Free grants were also made in aid of the rates in those unions in which the number of destitute poor was largest, compared with the means of relieving them, and when private subscriptions were raised, donations were made to an equal amount.

The check principally relied on, therefore, was, that the expenditure should be conducted, either immediately or proximately, out of the produce of the rates. No loan was to be made to any Board of Guardians until the Inspecting Officer had certified that they had passed a resolution to make the rate upon which it was to be secured, and that, to the best of his belief, they were proceeding with all possible dispatch to make

and levy such rate. This principle, although still imperfectly applied, and consequently irregular in its action, exercised a pervading influence over the working of this system of relief. In forming the lists of persons to be relieved, and making their demands upon the Commissioners, few committees altogether rejected the idea that it was their own money which they were spending; and in some districts the farmer rate-payers assembled, and insisted on large numbers of persons being struck off the lists, who they knew were not entitled to relief. The tests applied to the actual recipients of relief were, that the personal attendance of all parties requiring relief was insisted on, exceptions being made in favour of the sick, impotent, and children under nine years of age, and that the relief was directed to be given only in the shape of cooked food, distributed in portions declared by the best medical authorities to be sufficient to maintain health and strength. The "cooked food test*" was

* The ration consisted of one pound of biscuit, meal, or flour; or one quart of soup thickened with meal, with a quarter ration of bread, biscuit or meal. When bread was issued, one pound and a-half was allowed. It was

found particularly efficacious in preventing abuse; and the enforcement of it in some parts of the country cost a severe struggle. Undressed meal might be converted into cash by those who did not require it as food; and even the most destitute often disposed of it for tea, tobacco, or spirits; but stir-about, which becomes sour by keeping, has no value in the market, and persons were therefore not likely to apply for it, who did not want it for their own consumption. Attempts were made to apply the labour test to this system of relief; but, besides the practical difficulty of want of tools and proper superintendence, the Commissioners considered that, owing to the absence of any adequate motive, it would "lead to a want of exertion on the part of the men which would perhaps be more demoralising than relief without any work." It was therefore left to the Relief Committees in large towns and

found by experience that the best form in which cooked food could be 'given, was "stirabout," made of Indian meal and rice steamed, which was sufficiently solid to be easily carried away by the recipients. The pound ration thus prepared, swelled by the absorption of water to three or four pounds.

other situations favourable to such a mode of proceeding, to take their own course upon it; and the result was, that some light kinds of labour, such as cleaning the streets and whitewashing the cabins, were exacted by a few of the more zealous and active committees. Relief in aid of wages was strenuously insisted on by many of the Relief Committees, and was steadily and successfully resisted by the Commission; but it was not considered right, in the administration of a temporary measure, to require the surrender of the land held by applicants, provided they were proved to be at the time in a state of destitution.

This system reached its highest point in the month of July, 1847, when out of 2,049 electoral divisions, into which Ireland is divided, 1,826 had been brought under the operation of the Act, and 3,020,712 persons received separate rations, of whom 2,265,534 were adults, and 755,178 were children. This multitude was again gradually and peaceably thrown on its own resources at the season of harvest, when new and abundant supplies of food became available, and the demand for labour was at its highest

amount. Relief was discontinued to fifty-five unions on the 15th August, and the issues to the remaining unions entirely ceased on the 12th September. The latest date allowed by the Act for advances to be made, was the 1st October.

This was the second occasion on which upwards of three millions of people had been fed "out of the hands of the magistrate," but this time it was effectual. The Relief Works had been crowded with persons who had other means of subsistence, to the exclusion of the really destitute; but a ration of cooked food proved less attractive than full money wages, and room was thus made for the helpless portion of the community. The famine was stayed. The "affecting and heart-rending crowds of destitutes*" disappeared from the streets; the cadaverous, hunger-stricken countenances of the people gave place to looks of health; deaths from starvation ceased; and cattle-stealing, plundering provisions, and other crimes prompted by want of food, were diminished by half in the course of a single month. The Com-

* Report from Count Strzelecki to the British Relief Association.

mission closed amidst general applause, and "Resolutions were received from many hundreds of the committees, praising the conduct of the inspecting officers, and frankly and honourably expressing their gratitude to Government and the Legislature for the effective means afforded them for carrying out this benevolent operation*." This enterprise was in truth the "grandest attempt ever made to grapple with famine over a whole country†." Organised armies, amounting altogether to some hundreds of thousands, had been rationed before; but neither ancient nor modern history can furnish a parallel to the fact that upwards of three millions of persons were fed every day in the neighbourhood of their own homes, by administrative arrangements emanating from and controlled by one central office.

The expense was moderate compared with the magnitude of the object. The amount at which it was originally estimated by the Commissioners was 3,000,000*l.*; the sum for which Parliament was asked to

* Seventh and last Monthly Report of the Relief Commissioners.

† Letter from Sir John Burgoyne, quoted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons.

provide was 2,200,000*l.*, and the sum actually expended was 1,557,212*l.*, of which 146,631*l.* was paid to the Commissariat for meal supplied to the Relief Committees from the Government Depôts. The price of meal fortunately fell more than one-fifth during the progress of these operations, or from 2½*d.* a ration, to less than 2*d.*, including all expenses of establishment.

The Finance Committees, which were selected bodies, consisting of from two to four gentlemen in each union, "with rare exceptions acted with zeal and intelligence*." The Relief Committees, a miscellaneous body composed of the foremost persons in each petty district, whoever they might be, showed, as was to be expected, every variety of good and bad conduct. In some cases the three highest rate-payers could not read, and even themselves established claims to be placed on the list of destitute for daily rations. It is a fact very honourable to Ireland, that among upwards of 2000 local bodies to whom advances were made under this Act, there is not one to which, so far as the Government is informed, any suspicion of embezzlement attaches.

* Third Report of the Relief Commission.

In order to check the progress of the fever, which, as usual, followed in the train of famine, the Act 10 Vic., c. 22 was passed, by which the Relief Committees were empowered to attend to the proper burial of the dead, to provide temporary hospitals, to clear away nuisances, and to ventilate and cleanse cabins, the necessary funds being advanced by the Government in the same manner as the advances for providing food. These sanitary arrangements were extensively acted upon and at moderate expense. On the 17th August 326 hospitals and dispensaries had been authorized, with accommodation for more than 23,000 patients, with medical officers, nurses, ward-maids, &c. The additional expense incurred under this Act, was 119,055*l.*, the whole of which was made a free grant to the unions, in aid of rates.

The state of the finances of some of the unions was a source of deep anxiety through the winter and spring of 1846-7. Rates were not collected sufficient to defray the current expenses of the workhouses of these unions, and the guardians threatened to turn the inmates into the street, if assistance were not given from the public purse. The

dilemma was a painful and perplexing one. There was no reason to doubt the readiness of some of the persons who held this language to put their threat into execution; while, to admit the claim, might bring upon the Government the greater number of the workhouses, in addition to the whole of the outdoor relief; in other words, would transfer to national funds a burden intended by law to be local, and not likely to be administered with economy on any other footing. Important aid was, however, given. Large supplies of clothing were collected from the stores of the army and navy, and sent to Ireland for the use of the workhouses. Small sums of money, amounting in the aggregate to 23,503*l.*, were lent from time to time with a sparing hand to assist the guardians in providing food and clothing in the most pressing and necessitous cases; 4,479*l.* was expended in providing proper medical inspection and superintendence in localities in which great sickness prevailed; and 60,000*l.* was advanced for the enlargement of the workhouses, principally by the erection of fever-wards.

The improvement of the Fisheries on the western coast of Ireland has always been an

object much pressed upon the Government. In order to give the fishermen a motive for exertion, and to set them an example of improved modes of preparing the fish for sale, experienced curers were obtained from the Fishery Board in Scotland; six stations were formed, at which fish are purchased at a fair market-price, cured, and sold again for consumption to the highest bidder; and supplies of salt and tackle were provided for sale to the fishermen. This was done without any expense to the public, by means of a sum of 5000*l.* placed at the disposal of the Government out of the balance of the subscription for the relief of Irish distress in 1822.

The plan of making small loans to fishermen to enable them to equip themselves for their trade, was not resorted to, because experience had proved that the fishermen are induced by it to rely upon others, instead of themselves, and that they acquire habits of chicanery and bad faith in their prolonged struggle to evade the payment of the loans. Sir J. Burgoyne had authority given him by the British Relief Association, to apply 500*l.* to this object, and he induced the Relief Committee of the Society

of Friends to take up the same cause. "I have made," he states, "many inquiries for the purpose, but I have always made it a point that there should be a decided prospect of any advances being repaid, and here the matter hangs. The officers all report that they doubt being able to get the money back; and I think it so necessary to be firm on this point, that I have not made use of a penny of the 500*l.*, and have recommended the Friends to reserve their funds also for a better mode of expending them." Since then, the Society of Friends, who are able to give a more particular attention to such subjects than it is possible for the Government to do, have done much good by assisting poor fishermen to redeem their nets and other implements of their trade, which they had pawned during the season of extreme distress; and these excellent people have also adopted an admirable plan of providing good boats and all requisite gear, with a competent person to instruct the native fishermen, who are formed into companies or partnerships and work out the value of the boats, &c., of which they may then become the owners. A large supply of seamen's jackets and trousers, obtained

from the Admiralty, was delivered to the Society of Friends, for distribution among the poor fishermen on the west of Ireland.

From the first failure of the potato crop in 1845, the subject of providing seed was repeatedly considered, and the conclusion invariably arrived at was, that the moment it came to be understood that the Government had taken upon itself the responsibility of this delicate and peculiar branch of rural economy, the painful exertions made by private individuals in every part of Ireland to reserve a stock of seed would be relaxed, and the quantity consumed as food in consequence of the interference of the Government, would greatly exceed the quantity supplied by means of that interference. The Government therefore never undertook to supply any kind of seed already in extensive use; but Holland was had recourse to for flax and rye seed, Scotland for the hardy description of barley called bere, and England and the neighbouring Continental countries furnished turnip, carrot, beet-root, and other vegetable and green-crop seeds; all of which were sent to Ireland for sale at low prices, and latterly for gratuitous distribution. More than thirteen tons of turnip seed

belonging to the Government and the British Relief Association were distributed in the county of Mayo alone*, besides 125 hogsheds of flax seed; by which means, in addition to the present supply of food obtained, a foundation was laid for an improved system of agriculture by a rotation of crops. One of the remedial measures proposed by the Government at the commencement of the parliamentary session of 1847, was to make loans to landed proprietors to the aggregate amount of 50,000*l.* to enable them to provide their tenants with seed, which loans were to have been repaid out of the produce of the crops raised from the seed; but nobody availed himself of this boon. The objections which exist to the Government leaving its province to interfere in the ordinary business of private life, were in nothing more clearly demonstrated

* The small holders in the Barony of Erris, in this county, declined at first to accept the seed which was offered them, saying that if they sowed it, the crops would be seized by their landlords. This was not believed at the time in England, but it has nevertheless turned out perfectly true. This barony, of which Belmullet is the principal place, is the darkest corner of Ireland. In some instances broken Landowners and their families were receiving rations, while their Tenants were starving.

than in what took place in reference to this subject. The accidental detention, by contrary winds, of a vessel laden with rye and bere seed, called forth expressions of anger and disappointment from various parts of the west and south of Ireland which had depended upon this supply; and the unfounded belief that the Government had entered upon a general undertaking to provide seed corn, largely contributed to that criminal apathy which was one of the causes of large tracts of land being left waste in 1846—47. On the other hand, it was found, when inquiries were made for vegetable seeds in the spring of 1847, that every ounce of parsnip seed in the London market had been already bought up and sent to Ireland; which is only one instance among many that might be adduced, of the reliance which may be placed on private interest and enterprise on occasions of this sort*.

* The following interesting account of what took place in the county of Clare on the subject of seed, is extracted from Captain Mann's Narrative:

“The first supply of seed sent for distribution by sale, was received on the 13th March last, up to which period the prospect of the tillage of the land being neglected was very alarming. The seed-grain had been in most cases either partially or wholly consumed for food. Bad advice

There is still another measure which does not the less deserve to be mentioned, because it ended in failure. The Act 9 & 10 Vic. c. 109, passed at the close of the session of 1846, had appropriated a sum of 50,000*l*.

had been given, that the Government or the landlords would be forced into assisting—the former to pay wages for the time while the work was going on, and the latter to provide seed, if the Government would not. The supply alluded to was bere and rye. By dint of persuasion, and having it published by the Roman Catholic clergy, the quantity sent was taken and planted; and here let me add, that the most sanguine could not have anticipated the great benefit of this importation. The value of the bere as an early crop and produce exceeded every expectation. It was reaped and in the market the latter part of July; and as compared with other barley, it is stated to me, thrashed out five stone to the bar, of twenty hand-sheafs, while the other only yielded three stone from the same quantity. The rye grew on bog merely burnt, and that even slightly; in some cases the heather being in bloom where the rye in the same ground was ripe. Thus hundreds of acres were cultivated that might have lain waste; and as the rye-meal brought by the ‘Sisters’ from St. Petersburg to this depôt, and issued as rations, became, after some opposition, popular with the poor, it does not require any remark to show the value and importance of this article, when considered as an auxiliary substitute for the potato food, and the more so because it can be grown on inferior land here, and not like the Indian corn-meal, which we are forced to look to other countries for.

“The supply of green crop and oat-seed by Her Majesty’s ship ‘Dragon’ was received here the 12th of

to be granted in aid of public works of acknowledged utility, one-half of the expense of which was to be provided for by a loan, and another portion was to be contributed in cash by the persons principally interested

April last. Some few landlords purchased of the first, and supplied their tenantry, but of the latter but little was purchased at that time. The feeling still existed that the Government or the landlords would be forced into providing seed and assisting the tillage; but when that vessel sailed, and they became convinced to the contrary, the most pressing and even distressing applications were made to me by the people to procure a supply of any seed; the fact being clear that grain seed (oats and barley) was not to be procured. Most fortunately, in a few days after, the hired steamer 'Doris' arrived with her cargo of oat-seed, the greater part of which was freely purchased, and a vast quantity of land immediately tilled. A sudden and favourable reaction took place, all appearing anxious to raise something, and not let the land run to waste. Turnip-seed was imported by dealers to a very large amount; and those who could, bought and sowed it. Subsequently a small quantity was sent to me for gratuitous distribution. Lists of the parties who received it, and the quantities allotted, are herewith annexed; and to this were added some small pamphlets given to me by Lord Robert Clinton, my object being to assist the poor, and spread the benefit over the greatest possible extent.

"I have now the pleasure to state, that instead of this part of the country being as described in the first series, with respect to green crops, the turnip particularly has become a general produce with even the poorest. Quantities are daily exposed for sale in the markets, and with

in the works. No application was made to participate in the advantage of this arrangement, and the 50,000*l.* was therefore transferred in the next session of Parliament to the erection of Fishery Piers and other useful objects.

The qualities displayed by the officers intrusted with the conduct of these great operations, will always be regarded as a bright spot in the cloud which hangs over this disastrous period. The nation had never been better served. The administrative ability which enabled Sir R. Routh to dispose, without hurry or confusion, of masses of business which to most persons would have been overwhelming; the stout-

a mixture of Indian-corn meal, rice, or flour, it is used as a substitute for bread. Emulation has been excited; and a few days since I was invited to view an exhibition at Colonel Vandeleur's, of the following :

	stone.	lbs.			lbs.
3 swedish turnips	- 4	0	weight.	Heaviest of	
				the three	20
3 white ditto - - -	3	11	„	Ditto - -	20
3 mangle wurzel - -	3	8	„	Ditto - -	18

Beside white carrots, &c. Experiments have been tried with the potato set in drills very successfully; and I do trust that improvement will make further progress under the system of instruction which it is said will be adopted."

ness of heart with which Colonel Jones commanded, and ultimately disbanded his army of 740,000 able-bodied Irishmen; the admirable sagacity displayed by Sir J. Burgoyne in coming to a safe practical decision upon perplexed social questions, then perhaps for the first time presented to him; the remarkable financial ability of Mr. Bromley, the accountant to the Relief Commission; the cordial co-operation of Admiral Sir Hugh Pigot and his able secretary, Mr. Nicholls, and the valuable assistance rendered in many different ways by Colonel Mac Gregor, the head of the Constabulary Force, proved that, however great the crisis might be, the persons in chief trust were equal to it*. But the most gratifying feature of all, was the zeal and unanimity with which the large body of Officers employed devoted themselves to this labour of love†, although

* The readiness with which the Bank of Ireland, and the Provincial, National and other banks, undertook the office of Treasurer to the Finance Committees, and entered into every proposed detail and accommodation, in support of the operations of the Commissariat, the Relief Commission, and the Board of Works, is very creditable to the managers, and deserves the thanks of the public.

† All the letters and proceedings of these officers

they had been suddenly brought together for this particular occasion from many different branches of the public service, or from the retirement of private life. It may truly be said of them, that they "offered themselves willingly among the people;" and several painful casualties from the prevailing fever, and the failing health of others, showed that the risks and hardships attending this service were of no ordinary kind. The officers and men belonging to the numerous ships of war employed in the "Relief Service," entered with characteristic spirit upon duties which indicated in a more direct manner than ever before, that the real object of their noble profession, is, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; and it was creditable to their seamanship, as well as their humanity, that the dangers and hardships attending their incessant employment on the exposed western coasts of Ireland and Scotland during the stormy months

showed that their predominant feeling was an anxious desire to fulfil the benevolent mission on which they had been sent. One observed that he could bear anything but the "careless misery of the children;" another that his heart was broken by the sobs of the women returning to their homes with a smaller quantity of food than was sufficient for the support of their families.

of winter, did not lead to the loss of a single vessel*.

* The Four Commissions employed on these operations were composed as follows:—

The Board of Works.

Lieut.-Col. H. D. Jones, R.E., Chairman.

Richard Griffith, Esq., Deputy Chairman.

John Radcliff, Esq.

Wm. Thos. Mulvany, Esq. } Commissioneers.

Captain Larcom, R.E. }

The First Relief Commission, appointed by Sir Robert Peel's Government

Rt. Hon. E. Lucas, Chairman (afterwards retired).

Com.-Gen. Sir R. I. Routh (afterwards Chairman).

Colonel D. Mc Gregor.

Lieut.-Col. H. D. Jones, R.E.

Sir James Dombrain.

Professor Sir Robert Kane.

E. T. B. Twisleton, Esq.

Theobald Mc Kenna, Esq.

The Second Relief Commission, appointed by Lord John Russell's Government.

Major-Gen. Sir J. F. Burgoyne, K.C.B., Chairman.

T. N. Redington, Esq.

E. T. B. Twisleton, Esq.

Com.-Gen. Sir R. I. Routh:

Lieut.-Col. H. D. Jones, R.E.

Colonel D. Mc Gregor.

The Poor Law Commissioners in Ireland.

E. T. B. Twisleton, Esq.

Rt. Hon. Sir W. M. Somerville, Bart.

T. N. Redington, Esq.

Sir Randolph Routh was in charge of the Commissariat from the commencement to the end of the measures of relief.

It is due to Mr. Redington to state that his intimate

A slight reference to the exertions which had to be made for the single object of conducting and checking the expenditure, will give some idea of the magnitude and difficulty of the task which was imposed on the officers of the Crown.

In establishing a system of Relief Works, intended to bring employment to every man's door, it was impossible to avoid creating an extensive staff for the superintendence and payment of the labouring poor. Very voluminous accounts suddenly poured into the Office of Works from all parts of Ireland; and as the lives of thousands depended upon the supply of funds, it became a duty of the first importance to insure their immediate distribution over the whole surface of the country. Remittances were made to about 600 pay clerks weekly, and it was often found necessary to transfer from one to the other sums of money upon the authority of local officers, whereby an intermixture of accounts of a very intricate description took place. The weekly accounts sent to the office at Dublin ex-

acquaintance with Ireland, and excellent judgment, were a never-failing ground of reliance in the most difficult emergencies.

ceeded 20,000, and the pay lists were more than a quarter of a million in number, the expenditure being at one time at the rate of a million a-month. To watch the distribution of such large sums would have been a gigantic task, even for a long-established and well-organized department, but for a temporary establishment, composed, for the most part, of persons with little, if any, previous knowledge of business, the duty was one of unprecedented difficulty, and it is a matter of surprise that greater irregularity was not the consequence.

In the books of the temporary Relief Commission, it was found necessary to open accounts with more than 2000 bodies intrusted with the expenditure of public money; and such was the rapidity of the service, that within a period of five months, more than 19,000 estimates were received in the accountant's office, and acted upon, with a like number of accounts, which were registered for examination, and more than 17,000 letters were received and answered. The pecuniary transactions of this Commission were not with public officers, but with ephemeral bodies composed of persons generally unused to busi-

ness, and almost irresponsible; but the utmost good faith prevailed; and by requiring an immediate account, with vouchers, every fortnight, of the disbursement of the previous amount remitted, with the balance remaining on hand, before a further supply was sent down, the best control upon the expenditure was established, and the result has been the great saving (more than half a million) effected, while scarcely an instance of misappropriation has occurred. It has also been admitted in many parts of Ireland, that these accounts, and the instructions for their preparation, have induced habits of business that never before existed, while at the same time they have urged the Stamp Laws into more active operation.

The prompt examination and audit of the accounts of the Board of Works, the Commissariat, and the Relief Commission, was provided for by the deputation of experienced persons from the offices in London, under whose superintendence the whole of the expenditure has been subjected to a searching local revision, and wherever any symptom of malversation has appeared, the matter has been probed to the bottom.

It has been a popular argument in Ireland, that as the calamity was an imperial one, the whole amount expended in relieving it ought to be defrayed out of the Public Revenue. There can be no doubt that the deplorable consequences of this great calamity extended to the empire at large, but the disease was strictly local, and the cure was to be obtained only by the application of local remedies. If England and Scotland, and great part of the north and east of Ireland had stood alone, the pressure would have been severe, but there would have been no call for assistance from national funds. The west and south of Ireland was the peccant part. The owners and holders of land in those districts had permitted or encouraged the growth of the excessive population which depended upon the precarious potato, and they alone had it in their power to restore society to a safe and healthy state. If all were interested in saving the starving people, they were far more so, because it included their own salvation from the desperate struggles of surrounding multitudes phrenzied with hunger. The economical administration of the relief could only be provided for by making it, in part at least, a local charge.

In the invariable contemplation of the law, the classes represented by the rate payers have to bear the whole burden of their own poor; the majority of the British community did so bear it throughout this year of distress; and, besides fulfilling their own duties, they placed in the hands of the minority the means of performing theirs, requiring them to repay only one half.

A special objection has been raised to the repayment of the advances for the Relief Works, on the ground that their cost exceeds that for which they could now be constructed. The answer to this is, that these works were undertaken solely for the purpose of giving employment in a great and pressing emergency, when it was impossible for them to be executed with the same care and economy as in ordinary times*; that the counties are therefore chargeable with them, not as works, but as relief; and that if they had cost either half as much, or twice as much as they did, the liability would have

* One of the principal causes of the expense incurred, was the necessity of finding work for every person in the neighbourhood of his own home, which added greatly to the number of the works, and to the proportion of them left unfinished.

been the same. But when it is remembered that the expensive character of the works was in a great degree owing to the Board of Works not having received from the Presentment Sessions and the Relief Committees that assistance in keeping down the expenditure, which it was the duty of those bodies to have rendered, both by making a proper selection of the works to be undertaken, and by confining their recommendations for employment on them to those persons who were really destitute, it is a matter of surprise that any answer has been rendered necessary.

We should probably have heard less of these repayments if it had been generally known what their real amount is. The sum expended under the first Relief Works Act (9 & 10 Vic. c. 1) was 476,000*l.*, one half of which was grant, and the other half is to be repaid* by twenty half-yearly instalments, amounting on an average, including interest, to about 12,500*l.* each. The expenditure under the second Act (9 & 10 Vic. c. 107) was about 4,850,000*l.*, half of which was remitted, and the other half is repayable

* The first instalments due under the 9 & 10 Vic. c. 1 and 2 have been already paid.

by twenty half-yearly instalments of 145,500*l* each, including interest. The annual addition made to the Rates by the repayments under the two Acts relating to the Relief Works is therefore about 316,000*l*.*; while, by an Act passed on the 28th August, 1846, the Rates were relieved from an annual payment of 192,000*l*., being the remaining half of the expense of the Constabulary, the other half of which was already defrayed out of national funds. The additional charge upon the Rates, therefore, amounts only to 124,000*l*. a-year for ten years, or 1,240,000*l*. in all. The sum advanced under the 9 & 10 Vic. c. 2, on the security of grand jury presentments, was 130,000*l*., which will have to be repaid in various periods extending from three to ten years; but the expenditure under this Act was merely in anticipation of the usual repairs of the public roads, the cost of which is in ordinary years raised within the year without any advance. Lastly, the sum expended in the distribution of food under the 10 Vic. c. 7, and in

* Viz., 25,000*l*., being the aggregate of the two half-yearly instalments under the 9 & 10 Vic. c. 1; and

291,000*l*., the same under the 9 & 10 Vic. c. 107

Total 316,000*l*.

medical relief under the 10 Vic. c. 22, was 1,676,268*l.*, of which 961,739*l.* is to be repaid, and the remaining 714,529*l.* is a free grant. The first-mentioned Act included a fund for making grants as well as loans, and the demands for repayment have been adjusted as nearly as possible according to the circumstances of each district. In some of the western unions, where the amount of destitution bears the largest proportion to the means of the rate-payers, and, owing to the extent to which the potato was formerly cultivated, a painful period of transition has yet to be endured, only a small part of the sum expended is required to be repaid*;

* The proportions in which the expenditure was made a local or general charge in the following unions, were—

		Loan to be repaid.	Grant in aid of rates.
County of Mayo	{ Ballina	- £13,716	£43,610
	{ Ballinrobe	- 12,183	27,997
	{ Castlebar	- 7,282	19,813
	{ Swineford	- 6,620	31,797
	{ Westport	- 5,624	37,993
„ Galway	{ Clifden	- 3,228	8,868
	{ Gort	- 7,663	18,475
„ Clare	{ Scariff	- 6,406	10,943
„ Cork	{ Bantry	- 6,079	12,294
	{ Skibbereen	- 13,451	21,627
„ Kerry	{ Kenmare	- 3,359	10,956

while in other unions where the return of low prices has restored society to its ordinary state, grants have been confined to those cases in which the expenditure has exceeded a rating of three shillings in the pound on the valuation.

All the claims of the Exchequer, arising out of the Relief operations of 1846 and 1847 have now been described, and it must be borne in mind that the several localities received full value for what they have to pay. They were saved from a prolonged and horrible state of famine, pestilence, and anarchy, which was the main consideration; and they had, besides, the incidental advantage of the labour bestowed upon the Roads and other public works, especially in the poor and wild districts of the West, where lines of road have been opened with the aid of the relief grants and loans, which, although much wanted, could not have been undertaken for years to come without such assistance. The rest of the expenditure, including the large donations made to Relief Committees previously to the passing of the Act 10 Vic. c. 7, the cost of the staff of the Board of Works and of the Relief Commission, the Commissariat staff, and the heavy

naval expenditure, has been defrayed out of the public purse, without any demand for repayment.

Hitherto our narrative has been confined to what was done by the Government, but the voluntary exertions of private individuals contributed their full share towards this unprecedented act of public charity.

It is highly to the honour of our countrymen in India, that the first combined movement in any part of the British empire was made by them. On the arrival of the news of the first failure of the potato crop in the Autumn of 1845, a meeting, presided over by Sir John Peter Grant, was held at Calcutta, on the 2nd of January, 1846, for the purpose of concerting measures to raise a fund for the relief of the expected distress; and a committee, consisting of the Duke of Leinster, the Protestant and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Dublin, and six other persons, was solicited to act in Ireland as Trustees for the distribution of such sums as might be subscribed. This example was followed at Madras and Bombay, and the result was that a sum of 13,920*l.*, contributed as follows, was placed at the disposal of the committee:

Bengal - - - - -	8,200
Bombay - - - - -	2,976
Madras - - - - -	1,150
Ceylon - - - - -	718
Hong Kong, 18th Royal Irish -	82
Mobile, U. S. - - - -	192
Toronto, C. W. - - - -	300
England, including 200 <i>l.</i> from Lord John Russell - - - -	302
	<hr/>
	£13,920

The whole of this sum was distributed between the 24th of April and the 21st of December, 1846, and was entirely independent of the large subscriptions from different parts of British India subsequently added to the funds of other societies. More than 2000 letters were received by the Trustees of the Indian Relief Fund; and by a strict attention to economy, they were enabled to distribute 13,920*l.* at an expense of 180*l.*

In the United Kingdom, the Society of Friends were, as usual, first in the field of benevolent action. When the renewed and more alarming failure of the potato crop in the autumn of 1846 showed the necessity for serious exertion, a subscription was opened by them in London in the month

of November in that year; members of the Society were sent on a deputation to Ireland, and those who resided there aided by their personal exertions and local knowledge. On the 6th January, 1847, a committee, of which Mr. Jones Loyd was chairman, and Mr. Thomas Baring and Baron Rothschild were members, invited contributions under the designation of the "British Association for the Relief of extreme Distress in Ireland and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland." On the 13th of January, 1847, a Queen's Letter was issued with the same object, and the 24th of March was appointed by proclamation, for a General Fast and Humiliation before Almighty God, "in behalf of ourselves and of our brethren, who in many parts of this United Kingdom are suffering extreme famine and sickness." A painful and tender sympathy pervaded every class of society. From the Queen on her throne to the convicts in the hulks, expenses were curtailed, and privations were endured, in order to swell the Irish subscription. The fast was observed with unusual solemnity, and the London season of this year was remarkable for the absence of gaiety and expensive

entertainments. The vibration was felt through every nerve of the British Empire. The remotest stations in India, the most recent settlements in the backwoods of Canada, contributed their quota, and 652*l.* was subscribed by the British residing in the city of Mexico, at a time when their trade was cut off, and their personal safety compromised by the war with the United States. The sum collected under the Queen's letter was 171,533*l.* The amount separately contributed through the British Association was 263,251*l.**; and this

* The following are some of the most remarkable contributions :—

	£	s.	d.
Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen -	*2,000	0	0
H. R. H. Prince Albert - - -	500	0	0
Her Majesty the Queen Dowager - -	1,000	0	0
His Majesty the King of Hanover, as Duke of Cumberland and Chancellor of the University of Dublin - -	1,000	0	0
His Imperial Highness the Sultan - -	1,000	0	0
The East India Company - - -	1,000	0	0
The Corporation of the City of London -	1,000	0	0
The Bank of England - - -	1,000	0	0
The Duke of Devonshire - - -	1,000	0	0
The Worshipful Company of Grocers -	1,000	0	0

* Her Majesty also contributed £500 to the Ladies' Clothing Fund, which was established in connection with the British Relief Association.

aggregate amount of 434,784*l.*, was divided in the proportion of five-sixths to Ireland and one-sixth to Scotland. But besides

	£	s	d.
Messrs. Jones Loyd and Co. - - -	1,000	0	0
„ Rothschild and Co. - - -	1,000	0	0
„ Baring Brothers and Co. - -	1,000	0	0
„ Truman, Hanbury, and Co. (including 50 <i>l.</i> from their clerks, and 8 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> from their workmen) - - -	1,163	10	0
„ Smith, Payne, and Smiths -	1,000	0	0
„ Overend, Gurney, & Co. - -	1,000	0	0
An English Friend, two Donations -	1,004	0	0
An Irish Landlord, for Skibbereen -	1,000	0	0
Manchester and Salford Relief Committee	7,785	0	0
Newcastle and Gateshead ditto - -	3,902	0	0
Hull ditto - - - - -	3,800	0	0
Leeds ditto - - - - -	2,500	0	0
Huddersfield ditto - - - -	2,103	0	0
Wolverhampton ditto - - - -	1,838	0	0
York ditto - - - - -	1,700	0	0
Cambridge University and Town, including 617 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> from Trinity College, and 500 <i>l.</i> collected at the Baptist Chapel in St. Andrew Street -	2,706	0	0
Oxford University and City - - -	1,770	0	0
Proceeds of a Ball at Florence given by the Prince de Demidoff at San Donato, besides 500 <i>l.</i> from the Florence Relief Committee, and 9 <i>l.</i> 13 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> from the English servants at Florence - - - - -	891	17	2
St. Petersburg - - - - -	2,644	0	0
Constantinople - - - - -	620	0	0

this great stream of charity, there were a thousand other channels which it is impossible to trace, and of the aggregate result

	£	s.	d.
Amsterdam; collections in the English Church - - - - -	561	0	0
Denmark; partly collected by Parish Priests in the provinces - - -	504	0	0
Malta and Gozo - - - - -	720	0	0
Remittances from British Guiana, the result of public subscription - -	3,000	0	0
Nova Scotia, including a vote of 2,250 <i>l.</i> by the House of Assembly - -	2,915	0	0
Barbadoes Relief Committee - -	2,575	0	0
South Australia £1,000 in money, and an equal value in Wheat - -	2,000	0	0
Jamaica, including a vote of 525 <i>l.</i> by the House of Assembly - - -	1,537	0	0
Trinidad - - - - -	1,350	0	0
Newfoundland - - - - -	862	0	0
St. Lucia - - - - -	614	0	0
Grenada - - - - -	564	0	0
St. Christopher; vote of the Legislature of the Island - - - -	505	0	0
Bermuda; vote of the House of Assembly - - - -	500	0	0
Hobart Town - - - - -	500	0	0
Bombay - - - - -	9,000	0	0
Madras - - - - -	2,150	0	0
Remittance from the Mauritius, including 11 <i>l.</i> 16 <i>s.</i> 11 <i>d.</i> from the Seychelles Islands, and 16 <i>l.</i> 7 <i>s.</i> from Rodrigues, and in addition to 2,211 <i>l.</i> 13 <i>s.</i> collected by the Vicar Apostolic and sent direct to Ireland. (The amount subscribed at the Seychelles Islands,			

of which no estimate can be formed. There were separate committees which raised and sent over large sums of money. There were ladies' associations without end to collect small weekly subscriptions and make

	£	s.	d.
and at Rodrigues, is very remarkable, when the poverty of their inhabitants is considered.) - - - -	3,020	0	0
Collection at Basseterre, St. Kitts, from Negroes belonging to the Congregation under the charge of the Moravian Missionaries, per Rev. G. W. Westerley - - - -	15	17	10
Officers and crew of Her Majesty's ship "Hibernia" - - - -	167	17	11
Contribution by the Governor, Commissioner, Lieutenant-Governor, and officers of Greenwich Hospital, being the sum allowed them for a festival dinner in commemoration of the battle off Cape St. Vincent - -	40	0	0
The 2nd Regiment of Life Guards -	156	4	6
A diamond cross from a lady (realized) -	42	0	0
Workmen employed by Sir John Guest at the Dowlas Iron Works - -	176	17	10
Metropolitan Police - - - -	161	0	0
Proceeds of two amateur performances at the St. James's Theatre - -	1,413	0	0
Collected on board the British and North American Royal Mail steamer "Hibernia" for Ireland - -	51	12	8
Wesleyan Methodists; part of the first distribution of collections in various chapels - - - -	5,000	0	0

up clothes to send to Ireland. The opera, the fancy bazaar, the fashionable ball rendered tribute; and, above all, there were the private efforts of numberless individuals, each acting for himself and choosing his

	£	s.	d.
Members of the London Daily Press, chiefly Reporters and Compositors, in addition to other Contributions -	88	18	0
Proprietors of the "Morning Herald" and "Daily News," each - -	100	0	0
"Punch" - - - - -	50	0	0

Many of the smaller subscriptions, such as 800*l.* from the Town of Bridgewater, and 747*l.* from the Bahamas, are more remarkable in proportion to the means of the contributors, than many of those which have been mentioned.

The officers and men of the Coast Guard raised a fund amounting to 429*l.* which was expended by the members of the force in Ireland in giving relief in the neighbourhood of their respective stations. From the commencement of the distress, the Coast Guard has been distinguished for its active benevolence.

The National Club in London collected a sum of 17,930*l.*, 1000*l.* of which was from various congregations at Brighton, 500*l.* from an anonymous contributor, and 500*l.* from the Wesleyan Irish and Scotch Relief Committee. This fund was intrusted for distribution to the clergy of the Established Church in Ireland, acting under a committee appointed for each diocese, headed by the bishop.

The amount collected by the London Committee of the Society of Friends was 43,026*l.*, nearly the whole of which was disbursed through the Dublin Friends' Committee.

own almoners, of which no record exists except on High. Upon application being made to the managers of the Provincial Bank of Ireland to permit English charitable remittances to pass without the usual charge, it turned out that they had been in the habit of doing so for a considerable time, and that the amount sent through that one channel, in the six months ending on the 4th March, 1847, exceeded 20,000*l*. In the contemplation of this great calamity, the people of the United States of America forgot their separate nationality, and remembered only that they were sprung from the same origin as ourselves. The sympathy there was earnest and universal, and the manifestations of it most generous and munificent. The contributions from this land of plenty consisted principally of Indian corn and other kinds of provisions, and the cargoes were, for the most part, consigned to the Society of Friends, whose quiet, patient, practical exertions, commanded universal confidence. The freight and charges on the supplies of food and clothing sent to Ireland by charitable societies and individuals, as well from the United States and Canada on the one side,

as from England on the other, were paid by the Government, to an amount exceeding 50,000*l.**; all customs dues were remitted, and the meal and other articles were to a great extent taken charge of by

* Two United States ships of war, the "Jamestown" and "Macedonian," were manned by volunteers, and sent to Ireland and Scotland with the following charitable supplies, for which no claim for freight was made. These two cargoes will serve as a specimen of the rest :—

"JAMESTOWN."

Corn and Grain :—					cwt.	qrs.	bshl.
Wheat	.	.	.	.		4	0
Barley	.	.	.	.		3	4
Oats	.	.	.	.		2	4
Rye	.	.	.	.		9	2
Peas	.	.	.	.		30	0
Beans	.	.	.	.		279	3
Indian Corn or Maize	.	.	.	.		339	2
Meal and Flour :—							
Wheatmeal or Flour	.	.	.	.	96	1	0
Barleymeal	}	.	.	.	19	2	16
Oatmeal		.	.	.			
Indian Corn Meal	.	.	.	.	4,229	3	0
Rice	.	.	.	.	154	1	4
Bread and Biscuit	.	.	.	.	1,048	3	21
Potatoes	.	.	.	.	61	1	1
Apples, dried	.	.	.	.			6
Pork	.	.	.	.	707	0	16
Hams	.	.	.	.	291	3	4
Fish	.	.	.	.	4	0	0
Clothing	.	.	.	.	10 cases,	18 barrels.	

the officers of the Commissariat, and held by them at the disposal of the parties to whom they had been consigned for distri-

"MACEDONIAN."

Landed in Ireland.

Indian Corn Meal, 5,324 barrels	
at 196 lbs each . . .	1,043,504 pounds.
Rice, equal to 217 tierces at 6	
cwt. each . . .	145,824 "
Beans, 6 tierces of 4 cwt., 66 bbls.	
of 196 lbs., 38bags of 100 lbs.	19,424 "
Peas, 53 bbls. of 196 lbs., 100	
bags of 100 lbs. each . . .	11,388 "
Indian Corn, 38 bags of 100 lbs.	3,800 "
Wheat, 1 bag . . .	100 "
Salt Pork, 1 barrel . . .	200 "

Pounds 1,224,240 \approx 546 $\frac{1200}{2240}$ tons.

Besides 100 barrels Indian Corn Meal and 3 packages of Clothing, landed as a "private consignment to the Rev. Mr. Taylor."

Clothing, 13 boxes, 3 bales, 3 barrels . 19 packages.

Landed in Scotland.

1 package clothing,	133 bags oats,
1 barrel beef,	2 barrels beans, and
143 barrels meal,	8 chests of tea.

Of which the Glasgow Section received—

1 package clothing,	133 bags oats, and
1 barrel beef,	8 chests tea.
37 barrels meal,	

The Edinburgh Section received—

100 barrels meal; and 6 barrels meal and 2 barrels beans were delivered to Mr. Mathieson, of Stirling, as instructed by the manifest.

bution; by which means the necessary harmony was preserved between the operations of the Government and those of the private associations, and the bounty of the subscribers reached the destitute persons for whom it was intended, with as small a deduction as possible for incidental expenses. Thus, when the British Association was desirous of giving the cultivators on the Western Coast of Ireland an opportunity of purchasing seed at a low market price at the close of the sowing season of 1847, five large steamers were collected by the Government, which were loaded in a remarkably short space of time, with oats and other seed provided by the Association, and were sent forth, each to its appointed section of the Western Coast; so that every harbour accessible to a steamer, from Kinsale to Londonderry, was looked into, and what remained unsold was left in the Government dépôts for subsequent sale or gratuitous distribution. On the other hand, the Government received much assistance and support from the operations of these benevolent societies, and they were especially useful in bridging over the fearful interval between the system of relief by work and

relief by food. Several gentlemen, with a noble self-devotion, volunteered their services to the British Association, among whom Lord Robert Clinton, Lord James Butler, Count Strzelecki, and Mr. Higgins, were distinguished by their zeal and ability, and by the fortitude with which, for months together, they endured the pain and risk attending the immediate contact with hunger and disease.

A large committee, with the Marquis of Kildare at its head, was formed in Dublin under the name of the "General Central Relief Committee for all Ireland," the contributions received by which amounted to upwards of 50,000*l.*, independently of 10,000*l.* in cash and an equal value in food, entrusted to this committee from the sum raised by the Queen's Letter. British North America contributed through this medium the munificent sum of 12,463*l.*, including 5,873*l.* from Montreal; 1571*l.* from Quebec; and 3,472*l.* from Toronto. The United States gave 5,852*l.*, of which 3,199*l.* was from New Orleans. British India 5,674*l.*; the Cape of Good Hope 2,900*l.*; Australia 2,282*l.*; South America 772*l.*; the Military 386*l.*; Scotland, France, Germany, Italy,

Belgium, Gibraltar, the Channel Islands, West Indies, the Ionian Islands, &c., 2,168*l.*; Ireland, independently of local subscriptions, which were very considerable, 9,988*l.*; and England, over and above the 20,000*l.* remitted from the produce of the Queen's Letter, 8,886*l.*

Subscriptions were received to a smaller amount, but from an earlier period of the distress, by another committee established in Dublin under the name of the "Irish Relief Association for the Destitute Peasantry," which was announced to be a reorganization of the Association formed during the period of famine in the West of Ireland in 1831. The list of patrons commenced with the names of the Archbishop of Dublin and the Duke of Manchester; and, independently of some cargoes of corn, flour, &c., from Canada and the United States, the funds placed at their disposal amounted to nearly 42,000*l.*, among the contributions to which, the following were conspicuous:—England, 17,782*l.*; Ireland, 6,151*l.*; France, 1,390*l.*; Italy, including 1,481*l.* from Rome, 2,708*l.*; British North America, 2,821*l.* (1,165*l.* of this being from Quebec); United States, 847*l.*; India, 5,947*l.*, of which the large pro-

portion of 4,981*l.* was from Madras; West Indies, 1,043*l.*; Australia, 2,314*l.*; and from the officers and men of various regiments, and the pensioners and constabulary, 508*l.*

But the most considerable of the Dublin Charitable Committees was that composed of members of the Society of Friends, of which Mr. Joseph Bewley and Mr. Jonathan Pim were the Secretaries. The contributions placed at their disposal since the 3rd of December, 1846, in money and provisions, have been to the amount of upwards of 168,000*l.*, of which no less than 108,651*l.* is the estimated value of provisions (7,935 tons) consigned to them from the United States of America. Of the subscriptions in money, 35,393*l.* was remitted by the London Committee of the Society of Friends; 8,494*l.* by members of the Society and others in Dublin; and the large sum of 15,567*l.* by persons residing in the United States. The provisions received from America were as follows:—

		Estimated Value.		
	<i>Tons</i>	£	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
From New York	4,496	58,299	15	0
“ Philadelphia	1,870½	24,948	18	0
“ New Orleans	349	7,538	5	0

		Estimated Value.			
	<i>Tons.</i>	£	s.	d.	
From Newark, N. J.	316 $\frac{3}{4}$	5,141	0	0	
“ Baltimore	262 $\frac{1}{4}$	3,913	10	0	
“ Richmond, V.	252 $\frac{1}{2}$	3,486	15	0	
“ Charleston	169	2,362	0	0	
“ Alexandria, V.	102	1,422	10	0	
From Sundry other Ports, United States, America	117	1,518	7	10	

And in addition to these large donations of money and food, consignments of clothing were received from England and America, to the estimated value of from 5,000*l.* to 10,000*l.*

The ladies of Ireland exerted themselves with characteristic zeal and benevolence, to alleviate the sufferings of their country-people, and to promote their moral advancement, by awakening and encouraging a spirit of independent exertion, and fostering habits of industry and self-reliance. The “Ladies’ Relief Association for Ireland,” in the management of which the Honourable Mrs. Newcombe takes the principal part, and the objects of which are “to encourage industry among the female peasantry of Ireland, to contribute towards providing nourishment

for the sick, and to procure clothing for the destitute," raised 11,465*l.* previously to the 1st of August, 1847, of which 3,043*l.* was derived from the proceeds of a Fancy Bazaar in London, and of this sum 2,500*l.* was appropriated to the relief of families whose husbands or fathers "have been removed while performing their painfully laborious duties." The "Ladies' Industrial Society for the Encouragement of Remunerative Labour among the Peasantry of Ireland," of which Mrs. Lloyd is the active promoter, more particularly aims at encouraging the manufacture of those articles which are likely to find a ready sale in the trade; for which purpose, instruction is given in the best and most practicable descriptions of remunerative labour; patterns, models, and implements are furnished, and a sale is provided for the produce, through the intervention of a mercantile agency in Dublin. Numerous benevolent persons adopted the same course in various parts of Ireland, sometimes in connection with these societies, and sometimes using their own means, with such aid as was sent to them by their private friends. Mr. Gildea, the Rector of Newport, and the ladies of his

family, revived the manufacture of coarse linen at that place, and they have employed between 500 and 600 females since the beginning of January, in the execution of orders sent them by charitable persons*. The ladies of the Presentation Convent at Galway gave every day a good meal of porridge to upwards of 600 starving children who attended their schools. The ladies of the Owenmore Relief Committee raised and expended in various works of charity, 2,427*l.*, exclusive of grants of the British Association and of the Government, to five parochial kitchens superintended by them. Want of space alone prevents us from alluding to many other similar instances.

In the autumn and winter of 1846 efforts were made to induce the Government to take an active part in assisting emigration

* Nearly 3000*l.* was remitted to Mr. Gildea in advance, in sums of from 10*s.* to 20*l.*, for linens to be afterwards furnished. He might have received much larger sums, and he found great difficulty in stopping the outpouring of sympathy and support that came upon him; and until it became generally known that he had returned large sums of money, the influx did not cease. It is an interesting fact that of 30,000 yards of linen made up to the end of October, there is only one piece that was not duly returned to him by the workwomen, and Mr. Gildea thinks he shall still get the missing piece.

by an apportionment of the expense of passage and outfit between the public, the landlords, and the emigrants themselves; but, on a full consideration of the subject, it appeared that the emigration about to take place in the ensuing season to Canada and the United States, without any assistance from the public, was likely to be quite as large as those countries could properly absorb, and that the consequence of the interference of the Government would be that the movement would be carried beyond those limits which were consistent with safety, and that a burthen would be transferred to the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, which would otherwise be borne by those to whom it properly belonged, owing to their interests being more immediately concerned. It is also a point of primary importance, that those persons should emigrate, who, from age, health, character, and circumstances, are best able to contend with the hardships and difficulties of a settler's life, and it was considered that this object would be most fully attained if the emigration were entirely voluntary. The true test of fitness in this case is the possession, on the part of each indi-

vidual concerned, of the will and ability to emigrate; and the probability of helpless multitudes being sent forth, who, both for their own sakes and for that of the colony, ought to have remained at home, is increased in proportion as other motives and other interests besides those of the emigrant himself influence his act of expatriation. For these reasons Her Majesty's Ministers determined to confine themselves to taking increased securities for the safety of the emigrants during their voyage, and their early and satisfactory settlement after their arrival abroad. Additional emigration agents were appointed to Liverpool and to different Irish ports; the annual vote in aid of colonial funds for the relief of sick and destitute emigrants from the United Kingdom, was increased from 1000*l.* to 10,000*l.*; provision was made for giving assistance in the case of emigrant ships being driven back by stress of weather, and the Governor-General of Canada was informed that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to defray its fair share of any further expense that might have to be incurred in giving the Emigrants necessary relief,

or in forwarding them to places where they might obtain employment*.

Early in the year 1847 the roads to the Irish sea-ports were thronged with families hastening to escape the evils which impended over their native land. The complaint in Ireland, at the time, was, that those who went belonged to the best and most substantial class of the agricultural population. The complaint afterwards in Canada was that those who came were the helpless and destitute. The fact was, that the emigrants generally belonged to that class of small holders, who, being somewhat above the level of the prevailing destitution, had sufficient resources left to enable them to make the effort required to effect their removal to a foreign land; and the steps taken by them to convert their property into an available form, had for months before been the subject of observation. Large remittances, estimated to amount to 200,000*l.* in the year ending

* Upwards of 100,000*l.* has been expended by the Home and Provincial Governments, in giving relief to the sick and destitute emigrants landed in Canada in 1847, and in forwarding them to their destinations.

on the 30th March, 1847, were also made by the Irish emigrants settled in the United States and the British North American provinces, to enable their relations in Ireland to follow them*. The emigration of

* The following extract from a letter from Mr. Jacob Harvey of New York, to Mr. Jonathan Pim, one of the Secretaries of the Dublin Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, contains many interesting particulars relating to these remittances, which are highly honourable to the Irish character :—

“ New York, January 5, 1847.

“ The destitution of our poor at this season will certainly curtail the amount for Ireland, and it is used as an excuse by those who feel called upon to assist them at their own doors first. But I am happy to say that the poor labouring Irish themselves are doing their duty fully. Without any public meetings or addresses, they have been silently remitting their little savings to their relations at home ; and these remittances, be it remembered, go to every parish in Ireland, and by every packet. These drafts are from 1*l*. and upwards ; they probably average from 4*l*. to 5*l*. In my letter to J. H. Todhunter I told him I had ascertained from five houses here, that within the past sixty days, they have received and remitted from the poor Irish 80,000 dollars. I had not time to send round to the other houses that day ; but since the steamer sailed, I have collected further returns, although not yet all ; and to my no small delight, the sum total remitted since November the 1st amounts to 150,000 dollars or 30,000*l*. sterling. I am now collecting an account of the sums remitted through the same houses by the poor Irish for the year 1846, and I have received returns from the

1846 from the United Kingdom, which was the largest ever known up to that time, amounted to 129,851 persons; the emigration of the first three quarters of 1847 was 240,461; and almost the whole of it was from Ireland to Canada and the United States*.

five principal houses, and the sum total is 650,000 dollars, or 130,000*l*. There are yet four houses to hear from, which will swell the amount. This, however, is enough to astonish everybody who has not been aware of the facts; and it is but right that credit should be given to the poor abused Irish for having done their duty. Recollect that the donors are working men and women, and depend upon their daily labour for their daily food; that they have no settled income to rely upon; but with that charming reliance upon Divine Providence which characterizes the Irish peasant, they freely send their first earnings home to father, mother, sister, or brother. I requested J. H. Todhunter to have the facts I gave him published, and I make a similar request to thee, as they are still more cheering. A publication of the kind may stimulate the rich to do their duty, where they have hitherto neglected it; and it will give evidence to those who have no faith in Irishmen, that whenever they are able to get good wages, they never forget their relatives and friends who are in want."

* The emigration for each division of the United Kingdom during the first three quarters of 1847 was as follows; but it must be remembered that those who embarked at Liverpool consisted almost wholly of Irish. There can also be no doubt that the Irish helped to swell

Even this does not represent the full extent of the outpouring of the population of Ireland which took place in this eventful year. From the 13th January to the 1st November, 278,005* immigrants arrived at Liverpool from Ireland, of whom only 122,981 sailed from that port to foreign countries. The conflux of this mixed multitude was formidable both to the health and resources of the inhabitants of Liverpool; but they nobly faced the danger, and exerted

the tide from several other ports of Great Britain, and especially in the west of Scotland.

From Liverpool.	From other English ports.	Total from England.
114,301	20,942	136,395
From Scotland.	From Ireland.	Total.
8,155	95,911	240,461

* These Irish labourers who annually come to England, by way of Liverpool, to help to gather in the harvest, and return to Ireland after it is over, are included in this number. They are variously estimated at from 10,000 to 30,000.

themselves to meet the emergency with the vigour it required. The portion of the town occupied by the Irish was divided into thirteen districts, in each of which a relief station was opened, and twenty-four additional relieving officers were appointed, under the superintendence of two inspectors. The number of persons relieved daily amounted for some time to upwards of 10,000. The district medical officers were increased from six to twenty-one, and extensive premises were hired or constructed for the purpose of being used as temporary fever hospitals. All this was done at the expense of the inhabitants, and the only assistance given by the Government was, that when the fever increased to an alarming extent, quarantine ships were stationed in the Mersey to receive the infected. Nineteen relieving officers died at Liverpool alone of fever caught in the execution of their duties. The influx of poor Irish by way of Glasgow, Ardrrossan, Port Patrick, Fleetwood, the Welsh ports, Bristol, Plymouth, Southampton, and London itself, was also very large; and quarantine arrangements had to be made in the Clyde similar to those at Liverpool.

Some relief was obtained by the passing of the Act 10 & 11 Vic. c. 33, "to amend the Laws relating to the Removal of Poor Persons from England and Scotland;" and 4,583 paupers who had become chargeable to the Liverpool parochial funds, or who applied to be removed, were sent back to their own districts in Ireland, at a cost of 1,322*l.*, between the 19th July, when the Act came into operation, and the 31st October. Previously to this, there was very little crime among these poor people, not even in petty thefts; but it soon appeared that they preferred being sent to prison to being sent back to Ireland. In the year ending 30th September, 1846, 398 natives of Ireland were committed to the borough prison at Liverpool for begging, pilfering about the docks, &c. In the year ending 30th September, 1847, 888 were so committed. In the month of October 1846, 80 were committed; in the same month of 1847, 142. This pauper immigration passed inland to all the large towns of this island, as far as London and Edinburgh; and the following statement of the number of Roman Catholic clergymen who died of the Irish fever caught in attending the sick since March 1847, may

be taken as an index of the relative pressure* :—

Lancashire.

Rev. Peter Nightingale, resident priest of St. Anthony's, Great Homer Street, Liverpool.

William Parker, senior resident priest of St. Patrick's, Park Lane, Liverpool.

Richard Grayston, resident priest of St. Patrick's, Park Lane, Liverpool.

James Haggar, resident priest of St. Patrick's, Park Lane, Liverpool.

Thomas Kelly, D.D., resident priest of St. Joseph's, Grosvenor Street, Liverpool.

John F. Whitaker, removed from Manchester to succeed Dr. Kelly at St. Joseph's, where he died.

J. F. Appleton, D.D., senior resident priest of St. Peter's, Seel Street, Liverpool.

* 5000 Irish paupers were relieved in Manchester in the last week in February, and for several weeks following there were more than 4000 on an average receiving outdoor, and from 600 to 700 in-door, relief. This was independent of the adjoining districts of Salford and Chorlton, where great numbers of Irish were also relieved. Nearly 90,000 destitute and disabled Irish, including women and children, were reported to have received parochial relief in Scotland at a total expense of about 34,000*l.*; but as the same persons were frequently relieved in more than one parish, and were therefore returned by more than one Inspector, the number of persons of this description newly arrived in Scotland is not so great as that above stated.

John A. Gilbert, resident priest of St. Mary's, Edmund Street, Liverpool.

William V. Dale, resident priest of St. Mary's, Edmund Street, Liverpool.

Robert Gillow, resident priest of St. Nicholas's, Copperas Hill, Liverpool.

John Hearne, senior priest of St. John's, Wigan.

Robert Johnson, resident priest of St. John's, Wigan.

John Dowdall, resident priest in Bolton.

Cheshire.

Michael Power, resident priest of St. Mary's, Duckinfield.

Yorkshire.

Thomas Billington, Vicar-General of Yorkshire district, and senior resident priest of St. Mary's, York.

Henry Walmsley, senior resident priest of St. Ann's, Leeds.

Richard Wilson, resident priest of St. Anne's, Leeds.

Edward Metcalfe, successor to Rev. R. Wilson at St. Anne's, Leeds.

Joseph Curr, Secretary to Bishop Briggs, with whom he resided at Fulford House near York. He volunteered his services after the death of Mr. Metcalfe, and in

the course of a few weeks died at St. Anne's, Leeds.

J. Coppinger. Removed from Hull to supply the vacancies caused by the above deaths, and very shortly after his removal died at St. Anne's, Leeds.

Durham.

Joseph Dugdale, resident priest of St. Mary's, Stockton.

Northumberland.

James Standen, senior resident priest of St. Andrew's, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Right Rev. Dr. Riddell, Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District and Bishop of Longo. After the death of Mr. Standen, Bishop Riddell undertook to attend to the visitation of the sick in person. He very soon caught the fever and died at Newcastle.

Staffordshire.

Rev. James Kennedy, resident priest at Newcastle-under-Lyne.

Gloucestershire.

P. Hartley, resident priest of St. Peter's, Gloucester.

Wales.

Edward Mulcahy, resident priest of St. Mary's, Bangor, North Wales.

M. Carroll, resident priest at Merthyr Tydvil, South Wales.

Scotland.

Richard Sinnott, Stranraer, Greenock.

J. Bremner, Abbey Parish, Paisley.

W. Walsh, Old Monkland.

The pestilence, which all the precautions practicable on land could not overcome, broke out, as was to be expected, with increased virulence on board the emigrant ships. A new law was passed at Boston in Massachusetts, empowering the local authorities to demand a bond of 1000 dollars from the masters of emigrant ships for each passenger apparently indigent, that he should not become chargeable to the State or to the city for ten years, the effect of which was to divert the stream of emigration to a greater extent than usual to Canada and New Brunswick. The deaths on the voyage to Canada increased from 5 in every 1000 persons embarked, to about 60, or to twelve times their previous rate; and so many more arrived sick, that the proportion of deaths in quarantine to the numbers embarked, increased from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to about 40 in the 1000, besides still larger numbers who died at Quebec, Montreal, and elsewhere in the inte-

rior*. A Medical Board was appointed; large supplies of provisions were dispatched to the quarantine station; tents sufficient for the reception of 10,000 persons were issued from the Ordnance stores, and the labours of the Commissariat in this war

* The details of the frightful mortality connected with the great emigration of 1847 from Ireland to Canada, are as follows:—

Whole number of British emigrants embarked 89,738	
Died on the passage	5,293
at the quarantine station	3,452
at the Quebec Emigrant Hospital	1,041
at the Montreal ditto	3,579
at Kingston and Toronto	1,965
	<hr/>
	15,330

showing a mortality of rather more than 17 per cent. on the number embarked. One-third of those who arrived in Canada were received into hospital.

The people of Canada deserve great praise for the spirited and benevolent exertions made by them to meet the exigencies of this disastrous emigration, which is described as having "left traces of death and misery along its course, from the Quarantine Establishment at Grosse Isle to the most distant parts of Upper Canada, cutting down in its progress numbers of estimable citizens." Besides the larger hospital establishments, twenty-four Boards of Health were formed in Upper Canada. Numerous deaths also took place among the emigrants to New Brunswick. The ships containing the German emigrants, and two ships fitted out by the Duke of Sutherland from Sutherlandshire, arrived in Canada in a perfectly healthy state.

against famine and pestilence, were carried on at the same time on both sides of the Atlantic; but the utmost exertions and the most liberal expenditure could not prevent a fearful amount of suffering amongst the emigrants, and a painful spread of disease to the resident population.

We are well aware that among men of talents and of benevolent dispositions, there is a wide difference on the important question of emigration; and in what follows on this subject, we wish to be understood, not as committing ourselves to particular opinions, but merely as making a statement, in pursuance of the historical character of this review, of what we believe to have been the views which guided the resolutions of the Government.

There is no subject of which a merely one-sided view is more commonly taken than that of Emigration. The evils arising from the crowded state of the population, and the facility with which large numbers of persons may be transferred to other countries, are naturally uppermost in the minds of landlords and ratepayers; but Her Majesty's Government, to which the well-being of the British population in every

quarter of the globe is confided, must have an equal regard to the interests of the emigrant and of the colonial community of which he may become a member. It is a great mistake to suppose that even Canada and the United States have an unlimited capacity of absorbing a new population. The labour market in the settled districts is always so nearly full, that a small addition to the persons in search of employment makes a sensible difference; while the clearing of new land requires the possession of resources*, and a power of sustained exertion not ordinarily belonging to the newly-arrived Irish emigrant. In this, as well as in the other operations by which society is formed or sustained, there is a natural process which cannot with impunity be departed from. A movement is continually going on towards the backwoods on the part of the young and enterprising portion of the settled population, and of such of the former emigrants as have acquired

* Settlers in the backwoods must have the means of support from twelve to fifteen months after their arrival, and this cannot be accomplished for less than 60%, at the lowest estimate, for each family consisting of a man, his wife, and three children, or equal to $3\frac{1}{2}$ adults on an average.

means and experience; and the room thus made is occupied by persons recently arrived from Europe, who have only their labour to depend upon. The conquest of the wilderness requires more than the ordinary share of energy and perseverance, and every attempt that has yet been made to turn Paupers into Backwoodsmen by administrative measures, has ended in signal failure. As long as they were rationed, they held together in a feeble, helpless state; and when the issue of rations ceased, they generally returned to the settled parts of the country. Our recent experience of the effects of a similar state of dependence in Ireland, offers no encouragement to renew the experiment in a distant country, where the difficulties are so much greater, and a disastrous result would be so much less capable of being retrieved.

It must also be observed, that from an early period of the present distress, two modes of meeting the calamity presented themselves, which have since acquired greater distinctness in people's minds, and have been acted upon in a more and more systematic manner. The first of these was to stimulate the industry of the people, to augment the

productive powers of the soil, and to promote the establishment of new industrial occupations, so as to cause the land once more to support its population, and to substitute a higher standard of subsistence, and a higher tone of popular character, for those which prevailed before. This plan aimed at accomplishing the object without the pain or risk of wholesale expatriation; and the result proposed by it was to increase the strength and prosperity of the country and the happiness of the people, by enabling the present population to maintain itself comfortably at home by the exercise of its industry. The Government adopted this plan from the first, and has since promoted its success by every means in its power. The other plan was to relieve the mother-country by transferring large masses of people to the Colonies; and great efforts were made to obtain the command of public funds to assist in paying the expense of this emigration.

The main point, therefore, is, that by taking an active part in assisting emigration, the Government would throw their weight into the scale with the last of these two plans. They would assist it by their means;

and, what is of far more consequence, they would countenance it by their authority: and in the same degree, they would discourage and relax the efforts of those who are exerting themselves to carry out the opposite plan. In order to appreciate the full ultimate effect of such an interposition, it must be remembered that the solution of the great difficulty by means of emigration carried out on the scale and in the manner proposed, offers to the promoters of it the attraction of accomplishing their object by a cheap and summary process; while the other remedy, of enabling the population to live comfortably at home, can be arrived at only by an expensive, laborious, and protracted course of exertion: and it therefore behoves the Government, which holds the balance between contending parties, to take care to which side it lends its influence on a social question of this description.

Those who have purchased or inherited estates in which a redundant population has been permitted or encouraged to grow up, may with propriety assist some of their people to emigrate, provided they take care to prevent their being left destitute on their arrival in their new country. The expense of as-

sisting emigration under such circumstances properly falls on the proprietor. A surplus population, whether it be owing to the fault or to the misfortune of the proprietor or his predecessors, must, like barrenness, or the absence of improvements, be regarded as one of the disadvantages contingent on the possession of the estate ; and he who enjoys the profits and advantages of the estate, must also submit to the less desirable conditions connected with it. So long as emigration is conducted only at the expense of the proprietor, it is not likely to be carried to an injurious or dangerous extent, and it will press so heavily on his resources, as to leave the motives to exertion of a different kind unimpaired. Emigration is open to objection only when the natural checks and correctives have been neutralized by the interposition of the Government, or other public bodies. It then becomes the interest and policy of the landed proprietor to make no exertion to maintain his people at home, to produce a general impression that no such exertion could be successfully made, and to increase by every possible means the pressure upon those parties who, having the command of public funds, are expected to give

their assistance; and the responsibility of the consequences, whatever they may be, becomes transferred from the individual proprietors, to the Government or public body which countenances and promotes their proceedings.

Three things had become apparent before the close of the year 1846: the first was, that if these gigantic efforts were much longer continued, they must exhaust and disorganize society throughout the United Kingdom, and reduce all classes of people in Ireland to a state of helpless dependence; the second was, that provision ought to be made for the relief of extreme destitution in some less objectionable mode than that which had been adopted, for want of a better, under the pressure of an alarming emergency; and the third was, that great efforts and great sacrifices were required to provide another and a better subsistence for the large population which had hitherto depended upon the potato. Upon these principles the plan of the Government for the season of 1847-8, and for all after time, was based.

Much the larger portion of the machinery of a good Poor Law had been set up in Ireland by the Irish Poor Relief Act (1 & 2

Vic. c. 56), which was passed in the year 1838. The island had been divided into unions, which were generally so arranged as to secure easy communication with the central station; and these had been subdivided into electoral districts, each of which appointed its own guardian, and was chargeable only with its own poor, like our parishes. A commodious workhouse had also been built in each union by advances from the Exchequer*, and rates had been established for its support. No relief could, however, be given outside the workhouses, and when these buildings once became filled with widows and children, aged and sick, and others who might with equal safety and more humanity have been supported at their own homes, they ceased to be either a medium of relief or a test of destitution to the other destitute poor of the union. To remedy this and other defects of the existing system, three Acts of Parliament were passed in the Session of 1847†, the principal provisions of which were as follows: Destitute

* The repayment of these advances, which amount altogether to £1,145,800, has not yet been pressed, out of consideration for the circumstances of the country.

† An Act to make further provision for the Relief of

persons who are either permanently or temporarily disabled from labour, and destitute widows having two or more legitimate children dependent upon them, may be relieved either in or out of the workhouse, at the discretion of the guardians. If, owing to want of room, or to the prevalence of fever or any infectious disorder, adequate relief cannot be afforded in a workhouse to persons not belonging to either of the above-mentioned classes, the Poor Law Commissioners may authorize the guardians to give them outdoor relief in food only; the Commissioners' order for which purpose can only be made for a period of two months, but, if necessary, it can be renewed from time to time. Relieving officers and medical officers for affording medical relief out of the workhouse are to be appointed; and in cases of sudden and urgent necessity, the relieving

the Destitute Poor in Ireland, 10 Vic. cap. 31—[Passed 8th June, 1847.]

An Act to provide for the Execution of the Laws for the Relief of the Poor in Ireland, 10 & 11 Vic. cap. 90—[Passed 22nd July, 1847.]

An Act to make provision for the Punishment of Vagrants and Persons offending against the Laws in force for the Relief of the Destitute Poor in Ireland, 10 & 11 Vic. cap. 84—[Passed 22nd July, 1847.]

officers are to give "immediate and temporary relief in food, lodging, medicine, or medical attendance," until the next meeting of the guardians. After the 1st November, 1847, no person is to be relieved either in or out of a workhouse, who is in the occupation of more than a quarter of an acre of land. No person is to be deemed to have been resident in an electoral division so as to make it chargeable with the expense of relieving him, who shall not during the three years before his application for relief have occupied some tenement within it, or have usually slept within it for thirty calendar months. All magistrates residing in the union are to be *ex-officio* guardians, provided their number does not exceed that of elected guardians. Greater facilities are given for dissolving Boards of Guardians, in case they do not duly and effectually discharge their duty according to the intention of the several Acts in force. Public beggars and persons going from one district to another for the purpose of obtaining relief are rendered liable to one month's imprisonment with hard labour; and an independent Poor Law establishment is constituted for Ireland, consisting of three Commissioners (two of whom

are to be the Secretary and Under-Secretary for Ireland for the time being), an Assistant Commissioner and Secretary, and as many Inspectors as may be required.

The principle of a comprehensive Poor Law and of the abolition of mendicancy, having thus been established, the efforts of the Government were earnestly directed to the removal of the difficulties likely to impede its satisfactory working. The repayment of the first instalment due on account of the advances for the Relief Works of the winter and spring of 1846-7 (9 & 10 Vic. c. 107), was postponed until after the Spring Assizes of 1848, and it was announced that no demand would be made until after the 1st January, 1848, for the repayment of the advances under the temporary Relief Act, when the rates levied previously to that date for the current expenses of the permanent Poor Law equalled or exceeded 3*s.* in the pound, and that even when rates had been struck for the purpose of repaying the advances, they might, if necessary, be applied to defraying those current expenses. By these arrangements the demands for repayment between the Summer Assizes of 1847 and the Spring Assizes of 1848 were

limited to the second instalment for the Relief Works and repairs of Grand Jury Roads of 1846 (9 Vic. c. 1 and 2), amounting only to 27,000*l.* for the whole of Ireland; and after providing for this and for the expense of the gaols and other ordinary local demands, all the rates levied from the produce of the abundant harvest of 1847 became applicable to the relief of the people under the Poor Law, then for the first time coming into full operation. The Guardians were at the same time earnestly recommended by the Poor Law Commissioners to strike rates sufficient to meet the exigencies of the coming winter, and to be strict in the levy of them. They were advised to guard against the necessity of giving out-door relief to the able-bodied, by providing for disabled persons, widows, school-children, and fever patients out of the workhouse; and five Boards of Guardians which had obstinately persisted in not doing their duty, were dissolved, and paid Guardians were appointed in their place. Ireland had now had a year and a half's experience of the administration of relief on a great scale and in different ways, and the objects to be aimed at and the abuses to be avoided had become generally

known. "The very evil itself," the Relief Commissioners observe in their Sixth Monthly Report, "has been attended with a salutary reaction, and the whole country seems, by this experience, to have been made sensible that it is only by the most rigid and thoroughly controlled principles of affording relief by any public arrangement, that society can be protected from a state of almost universal pauperisation, and that the charge of a more benevolent alleviation of distress than what is absolutely necessary for the bare support of the thoroughly destitute, must and ought to be left to the exertions and voluntary distribution of the charitable and humane, which it is hoped will always be largely afforded." During the week ended Saturday the 14th August, 1847, there were above 20,000 persons on the relief lists of the electoral division which comprises the northern half of the city of Dublin; and as the operations under the Temporary Relief Act terminated in that union on the 15th, the guardians, on the 16th, had to deal with the apparent necessity of having to provide relief for above 20,000 persons. On the morning of that day, however, owing to previous arrangements, they

had room in the workhouse of their union for 400 individuals; and by offering workhouse relief to applicants, aided by some assistance from the Mendicity Institution, the guardians were enabled in the course of six days to reduce the number on the relief lists to about 3000 persons. This is only one instance among many that might be adduced, of the practical value of the experience that has been acquired in Ireland of the true principles of Poor Law management.

A principle of great power has thus been introduced into the social system of Ireland, which must be productive of many important consequences, besides those which directly flow from it. Mr. Drummond's apophthegm, that "property has its duties as well as its rights," having now received the sanction of law, it can never hereafter be a matter of indifference to a landed proprietor, what the condition of the people on his estate is. The day has gone by for letting things take their course, and landlords and farmers have the plain alternative placed before them of supporting the people in idleness or in profitable labour. Hitherto the duties of Irish landlords had been, as

jurists would say, of imperfect obligation. In other words, their performance depended upon conscience, benevolence, and a more enlightened and far-seeing view of personal interest than belongs to the generality of men; the consequence of which has been a remarkable difference in the conduct of Irish landlords: and while some have made all the sacrifices and exertions which their position required, others have been guilty of that entire abandonment of duty which has brought reproach upon their order. For the future this cannot be. The necessity of self-preservation, and the knowledge that rents can be saved from the encroachments of poor-rates, only in proportion as the poor are cared for and profitably employed, will secure a fair average good conduct on the part of landed proprietors, as in England, and more favourable circumstances will induce improved habits. The poor-rate is an absentee tax of the best description; because, besides bringing non-resident proprietors under contribution, it gives them powerful motives either to reside on their estates or to take care that they are managed, in their absence, with a proper regard to the

welfare of the poor*. Lastly, the performance of duty supposes the enjoyment of equivalent rights. When rich and poor are

* "I would sincerely regret that anything I have said should appear to be written as if I sought occasion to point out errors and hold them up; far from it; I mention them with sorrow and a kindly wish that they may be corrected. The position of the respectable classes at this moment in many instances is surely pitiable. There is but one course by which this country can rise and take her proper position, and that is by a hearty and sincere determination to work for the public good, at the same time throwing aside all selfish and party feeling. In that case, there is no reason why we should despair; but otherwise, no mortal can either pass laws or propose any other thing which would be attended with success. In this I particularly allude to the Poor Law now about to be administered. I look upon it as an indirect absentee tax, drawing from those who did not contribute before, or in a very slight degree. It assures the poor man that from the land he must have support, and that what he labours on will one day sustain him when he can no longer toil. It will also compel others to consider that unless employment is provided, they must support him without a remunerative return,—and if this is rightly considered, then the heavy affliction which the Almighty has been pleased to lay on them will prove a lesson for good.

"On the subject of relief being given without having a corresponding return for it in labour, I feel very apprehensive that, owing to the habits of the lower orders, the present repugnance to entering the union-house may give way, and that for the sake of an idle life, they may accept the terms. To prevent this and rescue both landlord and peasant from certain ruin, there must be employ-

at one again, the repudiating farmer will find the position of his landlord too strong to allow of his taking his present license, and

ment given fairly remunerative to both, not by Government, but by the owners of the soil. Until lately, what was the condition of the peasant? Work as he would, till and rear what he might, he could never hope to benefit. His portion was the potato only, shared, it may be said, with his pig. He dare not use anything else. Let misfortune come on him, or disease render him unable to work, he had no claim on the land. One a little less poor than himself might help him, but who else? The charity I have seen has been from the poor to the poor. Is it any wonder that they became spiritless, idle, and even worse?

"A townland near here, owned by a landlord who resides constantly away, is let to a middleman at 10s. an acre. That middleman resides away also, and he relets it to a person who lives in the county of Cork, and only occasionally comes there. It is sub-let again, until the price received for a quarter of an acre is 14. 10s. per annum. Can that place be otherwise than full of distress?

"Near it is another townland. The owner resides here, but he has never attended to it. In the late calamity he applied to me for seed and assistance, declaring his intention to provide seed at his own expense; and to insure its being sown, he said he should employ a person to superintend the sowing, as the land was prepared. His tenants were without food; but to encourage and assist in this case, an application was made by me to the Society of Friends for a supply to sustain the people while working, which was granted. The party supposed he had about sixty to provide for, but was frightened at over 600 applications for food; and it then

it will then be fearlessly asserted that the converse of Mr. Drummond's maxim is also true, and that "Property has its rights as well as its duties." For the first time in the history of Ireland, the poor man has become sensibly alive to the idea that the law is his friend, and the exhortation of the parish priest of Dingle to his flock in September 1847, indicates an epoch in the progress of society in Ireland:—"Heretofore landlords have had agents who collected their rents, and they supported them. The grand jury had agents to collect the county-cess, and

came out that his land was underlet to an enormous degree. He had never paid proper attention by inspecting his farms, &c. The result is, that now he can neither get rent, nor the repayment of the value of the seed. What has been grown will not suffice to feed those who are located on the land. They cannot pay rent, and they will not give up their holdings. The population has been increased in such cases, and others, to an extent beyond what the land can bear. Another cause is, that the Roman Catholic clergy derive their income mainly from fees and contributions at marriages and christenings; and though there are some who see the disastrous result of encouraging the increase of the population, and are scrupulous on that head, still, as their subsistence depends on it, it cannot be expected that they will exert themselves in a way likely to deprive themselves of daily bread by discouraging thoughtless rushing into improvident marriages."—CAPTAIN MANN'S NARRATIVE.

they supported them. Now, for the first time, the poor man has an agent to collect *his* rent. That agent is the poor-rate collector, and he should be supported by the poor." Time must, however, be allowed for the gradual working of this feeling, before its full effects can be seen.

Those who object to the existing Poor Law are bound to point out a more certain and less objectionable mode of relieving the destitute and securing the regular employment of the poor. The principle of the Poor Law is, that rate after rate should be levied *for the preservation of life*, until the landowners and farmers either enable the people to support themselves by honest industry, or dispose of their property to those who can and will perform this indispensable duty.

The fearful problem to be solved in Ireland, stated in its simplest form, is this. A large population subsisting on potatoes which they raised for themselves, has been deprived of that resource, and how are they now to be supported? The obvious answer is, by growing something else. But that cannot be, because the small patches of land which maintained a family when laid down to po-

tatoes, are insufficient for the purpose when laid down to corn or any other kind of produce; and corn cultivation requires capital and skill, and combined labour, which the cotter and conacre tenants do not possess. The position occupied by these classes is no longer tenable, and it is necessary for them either to become substantial farmers, or to live by the wages of their labour. They must still depend for their subsistence upon agriculture, but upon agriculture conducted according to new and very improved conditions. Both the kind of food and the means of procuring it have changed. The people will henceforth principally live upon grain, either imported from abroad or grown in the country, which they will purchase out of their wages; and corn and cattle will be exported, as the piece-goods of Manchester are, to provide the fund out of which the community will be maintained under the several heads of wages, profits, and rents. It is in vain that the granary of the merchant and the homestead of the farmer are filled to overflowing, if the mass of the people have not the means of purchasing, and it has therefore become of the highest consequence that the resources which are

most available for the payment of wages should be cultivated to the utmost. The Poor Law cannot alone bear the whole weight of the existing pauperism of Ireland; and its unproductive expenditure, however indispensable, must be supported by adequate industrial efforts, in order to prevent all classes of society from being involved in one common ruin. Before this crisis occurred, Sir Robert Kane had proved in theory, and many good farmers in practice, that a much larger produce might be raised, and a much larger population might be supported from the soil of Ireland than heretofore; and this view has since been confirmed by numerous surveys conducted under the superintendence of the Board of Works, which have disclosed an extensive and varied field for the investment of capital, upon which the whole unemployed population of Ireland might be employed with much advantage to all parties concerned. The great resource of Ireland consists in the cultivation of her soil, the improvement of her cattle, the extension of her fisheries; and while there are large tracts of flooded land to be reclaimed, and still larger tracts of half-cultivated land to be brought to a higher state of productiveness,

it would be a misdirection of capital to employ it in the less profitable manufactures of cotton and wool. Ireland is benefited to a greater extent than many parts of Scotland and England are, by the markets and the means of employment which Manchester and Glasgow afford; but her own staple manufacture is corn.

The Treasury was authorized by the 1 & 2 Wm. IV, c. 33, passed in 1831, to lend money to private individuals for the improvement of their estates, provided the value of the estate was increased 10 per cent. and repayment was made in three years; and by the first Act of the Session of 1846 the period of repayment was extended to twenty years. This power was however very sparingly acted on. Grave objections existed to the State becoming a general creditor throughout the country, and the operations of private capitalists were likely to be deranged and suspended by the interference of such a competitor. A rate of interest (5 per cent.) higher than the market rate for money lent on mortgage, was therefore charged, and the result was, that only three persons took out loans under this arrangement, one of whom was the late Lord Bess-

borough. At the close of the Session of 1846, the Act 9 & 10 Vic. c. 101, was passed, by which 1,000,000*l.* was authorized to be lent for drainage in Ireland, and repayment was to be made in equal half-yearly instalments, spread over twenty-two years, including interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; but this Act could not be worked, so far as Ireland was concerned, partly owing to a legal opinion that tenants for life were not eligible for loans under it, and partly because the works must be executed to a certain extent before the money could be advanced. Upon this the Treasury issued a Minute dated the 1st, and a letter dated the 15th December, 1846*, offering to lend money for the general improvement of estates, including drainage, on a footing which combined the advantages of the previous Acts with the indulgent mode of repayment introduced by the last; and in the following session the Act 10 & 11 Vic. c. 32 was passed, by which all the existing legislation on the subject was consolidated, and loans† were authorized to be

* First Board of Works Series of 1846-7, page 338 to 341.

† The purposes to which these loans are applicable are as follows :—

made in Ireland to the extent of 1,500,000*l.*, on the principle that the improvements on each estate are to be executed by the proprietor, and that the interference of the officers of the Government is to be confined to ascertaining, in the first instance, that the proposed improvements are likely to be of such a permanent and productive character as would justify the cost of them being made a charge upon the estate, with priority over other incumbrances, and, afterwards, to inspecting the works from time to time, so as to secure the proper application of the sums advanced to the purposes for which they were intended. No advance can be made under this Act unless the increased annual value to be given to the land by the proposed improvement shall equal the

1. The drainage of lands by any means which may be approved by the Commissioners.
2. The subsoiling, trenching, or otherwise deepening and improving the soil of lands.
3. The irrigation or warping of lands.
4. The embankment of lands from the sea or tidal waters, or rivers.
5. The inclosing or fencing, or improving the fences, drains, streams, or water-courses of land.
6. The reclamation of waste or other land.
7. The making of farm roads.
8. The clearing land of rocks and stones.

amount to be charged on it; and a difficulty having arisen from the circumstance that the full benefit to be derived from draining is attained in different soils at different periods after the completion of the drains, it was declared by a Treasury Minute dated the 15th June, 1847, that it is not necessary that each portion of land improved should yield, in the first and in every subsequent year, an additional rent equal to $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum on the outlay beyond the present rent; but that the general result of the improvement of the lands on which the rent-charge is to be secured, will, one year with another, from the period when the full benefit of the improvement may be supposed to have accrued, be such as to produce an increased annual value to the above extent; taking care, of course, that the rent-charge is fixed upon lands amply sufficient to secure the repayment to the Government of the sums so charged. These directions had particular reference to the circumstances of the poverty-stricken districts in the West of Ireland, where it is peculiarly desirable to increase the food grown on the spot, and to provide the means of employment for the people in the pro-

ductive avocations of agriculture; and every practicable facility and preference is therefore given to the landed proprietors in those districts, which is not inconsistent with justice to other parties. It was determined by the same Minute, in pursuance of the course taken by Parliament with respect to the loans for drainage in England and Scotland, that the loans to be made to any one landed proprietor should not, under ordinary circumstances, exceed, in the aggregate, the sum of 12,000*l.*; but if, in any particular case, owing to the extent of the property to be improved, or other causes, it should be advisable to enlarge this limit, the Lords of the Treasury will be prepared to authorize such additional sum as may appear to be proper, not exceeding, however, an aggregate amount to the same proprietor, of 20,000*l.*

In taking its line on this subject, the Government had to choose between employing the agency of the landed proprietors and that of public officers; and after much consideration and some experience, the final decision was in favour of the former alternative, as above described.

By following this course, all the existing relations of society were preserved and

strengthened; the landed proprietors were held to their responsibility for the well-being of the people residing on their estates, and they were assisted to the extent of the loan fund placed by Parliament at the disposal of the Government. The proprietor or his agent has the strongest interest in seeing that the work is well done, and can exercise the most effectual superintendence over it; and as the people are invited to exert themselves under the eye of their natural employers, the healthy relation of master and labourer becomes established throughout the country. It has not, as yet, been usual in Ireland, for the landlord to undertake to make the more expensive and permanent improvements, as is the case in England, but it may be hoped that an impulse will be given to this wholesome practice by the loans to proprietors under the Land Improvement Act. The landlord will be encouraged to proceed in a course of improvement which he finds by experience to be profitable to him; he will be likely to make further investments on land which has been reclaimed or improved by him, and he will be especially careful to

prevent it from being subdivided into small holdings*.

The other plan of reclaiming waste lands by the direct agency of the Government, did not survive the objections made to it on the score of its interference with the rights of private property. The land must be obtained before it could be improved, and was it to be left to the discretion of Commissioners to take any bog-land they pleased at a valuation; to single out, for instance, a

* By neglecting their estates, and omitting to construct proper farm buildings, and to make other necessary improvements, Irish landlords relinquish their position in rural society, and give free scope to the agrarian revolutionary plans which, under the disguise of "fixity of tenure" and "tenant right," would dispossess the landlord, without conferring any permanent benefit on the tenant. In the smaller class of holdings, the entire gross produce is insufficient to support a family, without allowing for either rent, seed, or taxes; and even supposing that, with the dangerous help of the potato, eked out by harvest-work and begging, a rent is paid, the tendency to multiply and subdivide is so strong, that if the whole rent were given up, the holders would become in a generation or two much more numerous and equally poor. The fact is, that the main hope of extrication from the slough of despond in which the small holders in the centre and west of Ireland are at present sunk, is from the enterprise and capital and improved husbandry of the class of owners commonly known by the name of landlords.

tract of unreclaimed land in the centre of an estate? Some firm land also must be annexed to each allotment for the erection of the farm buildings, and to obtain soil for the improvement of the bog, and this would have given a still wider and more arbitrary discretion to the Commissioners. The compulsory powers had therefore to be given up; and without them the plan could not be worked.

But there are other objections to this plan which have a much deeper root. The first result of the Government undertaking to reclaim the waste lands of Ireland would be that the mass of the people would throw themselves on these works, as they did upon the roads, taking it for granted that the means of payment were inexhaustible, and that less labour would be exacted than in employment offered with a view to private profit. The landlords and farmers would consider that, as the Government had undertaken to employ the people and improve the soil, they were themselves absolved from responsibility, and they would refer all the persons who applied to them for employment, to the Government works,

as has been so often done on former occasions. The single agency of the Government would be substituted for the exertions of the whole body of the landowners acting in concert with their tenants and dependants; and instead of landed proprietors and farmers laying out their own money for their own benefit, with all the care and economy which this supposes, we should have hundreds of public officers, of various grades and characters, expending public money, for the supposed benefit of the public, in a business totally foreign to the proper functions of Government, and without a possibility of effectual superintendence; the inevitable consequence of which would be, bad work, idle habits, and profuse and wasteful expenditure. Lastly, when the land had been reclaimed, whatever care might be taken to dispose of it in farms of reasonable size, however durable might be the interest granted, or whatever legal restrictions might be attempted to be imposed, the old process of the subdivision of the land, and the multiplication of the persons subsisting upon it, would run its course. Nothing can supply the place of

the watchful supervision exercised by a proprietor, for the protection of his own interests, in such a case.

A peasant proprietary may succeed to a certain extent*, where there is a foundation of steadiness of character, and a habit of prudence, and a spring of pride, and a value for independence and comfort; but we fear that all these words merely show the vain nature of schemes of peasant proprietorship for Ireland. The small holders of Belgium†, with all their industry and frugality,

* In what follows we must be understood as giving expression to the practical conclusions of those who, having been charged with the unenviable task of superintending the measures of relief, and assisting to replace society on a permanent basis after it had been unsettled by this great calamity, must be allowed to have had unusual advantages for a close examination of the subject under a variety of aspects.

† The same results appeared in those parts of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Sweden, in which the subdivision of the land has been carried to the greatest extent. The following extract from a letter received in January last from Brest, contains a correct description of the manner in which that part of France was affected by the dearth: "All the petty farmers are in the greatest distress, having been obliged to sell their wheat and most of their other grain in October, to pay their rents due on Michaelmas-day. The overplus in the crop of buckwheat is not sufficient to compensate for the deficiency in their stock of potatoes, and they are now living on cab-

have, during this calamitous period, been the most distressed population in Europe next to Ireland. Their own resources were too small to carry them through a season of dearth, and they had no employers to assist them. In India, society is based on a system of small holdings, and there is no country in which destructive famines have been so common. In Ireland itself, the greatest over-population, and consequently the greatest distress, prevailed in those districts in which, owing to the existence of long leases, the landlords had no power to prevent the subdivision of the land. Mere security of tenure is of no avail, without the

bagels, carrots, and a very small proportion of buckwheat. Unless some stringent measures be adopted to prevent the progressive subdivision of land in France, the country must eventually be reduced to the present state of Ireland." It has been justly observed, that "in agriculture, as in every other industrial process, prosperity must depend upon the application of capital to production; and equal injury is done when such application of capital is prevented, either by landlords refusing to give tenants a beneficial interest in their improvements, or by a combination of pauper occupants to prevent capitalists from obtaining possession of land." Those who take an interest in this important subject will do well to read Mr. M'Culloch's excellent chapter on compulsory partition, in his recently-published work "On the Succession to Property vacant by Death."

capital, and skill, and habits of life, and, above all, the wholesome moral qualities required to turn this advantage to good account. During the late season of dearth, food was dearer in the long peninsula which stretches to the south-west of England, than it was in Ireland, and the poor had no resource analogous to the farming stock of the Irish small holder; but the Devonshire and Somersetshire labourer lives by wages paid by persons richer than himself; and though severely pinched, he had enough for daily bread, with some assistance from charitable aid, which was generally afforded throughout the west of England, during the late season of distress, either by parochial subscriptions or by allowances from the unions. The south-west of England is the least favourable specimen which Great Britain affords of the system of society based upon wages, because the flourishing manufactures which formerly existed in that quarter have disappeared before the superior natural advantages of the North, and wages are consequently very low*. In every other

* The inferior condition of the peasantry in the West of England is in a great degree owing to the increased use

part of this island the contrast is more decidedly to the disadvantage of the small holdings; and in Northumberland, which is a county of large farms, there may be said to be no poor. Whether the good order, the physical well-being, or the moral and intellectual progress of rural society, be considered, the best model is that in which the educated and enlightened proprietor, the substantial farmer, and the industrious labourer on regular wages, each performs his appropriate part.

The works required for deepening and straightening the course of many of the rivers are of peculiar importance to Ireland; because until the outfalls have been cleared, the landowners cannot enter upon the detailed or thorough drainage of their respective estates. In such cases the necessity of working upon the lands of different proprietors calls for the active interposition of the Board of Works, who make the preli-

of the potato, the cultivation of which by the poor was much encouraged by the gentry and clergy as a cheap means of subsistence during the high prices of corn in the last war. Somersetshire and Devonshire were, in fact, fast becoming potato countries; and if the blight of that vegetable had occurred twenty years later, their sufferings might have approached to those of Ireland.

minary survey, execute the work, and afterwards apportion the charge, according to the benefit derived by each person interested. The funds for carrying on these improvements had been chiefly obtained by the issue of debentures under the authority of the Acts of Parliament relating to the subject; but, under existing circumstances, loans were not to be expected from private individuals at a moderate rate of interest; and the ordinary loan fund of the Board of Works amounting to 60,000*l.* a-year, was therefore reinforced with 120,000*l.*, transferred to it from the London Loan Commissioners, and 250,000*l.* issued from the Consolidated Fund; making altogether a sum of 430,000*l.* placed at the disposal of the Board of Works, between the 1st April, 1847, and the 1st April, 1848, to be advanced by them for works of utility in Ireland, but principally for drainage of the above-mentioned description.

Next to agricultural improvements, well-selected public works perhaps offer the greatest resource in the present unhappy circumstances of Ireland. It is a mistake to suppose that opening a good road may not be the most reproductive work in many districts; and the construction of railroads

on the great lines of communication, does for the whole country what new roads do for particular districts, facilitating and stimulating every description of production, and agriculture more than all, binding society together by a closer intercourse and interchange of good offices, and rapidly diffusing through the remote provinces the advantages enjoyed by the more favoured parts of the country.

The objection to Lord George Bentinck's plan for assisting Irish railways was, that while it was inadequate as a measure of relief, it was too large and indiscriminate when viewed as a measure for the promotion of public works. Private enterprise would have been overlaid; the bad lines would have been benefited at the expense of the good; the public credit would have been lowered; the available stock of national capital would have suffered an additional drain which it could ill afford; and after all, the object of relieving the existing distress would not have been attained. The famine was then at its height, and it could not be stayed by any measure short of distributing food to the multitude. After allowing for the largest number of persons who

could be employed on railways, millions must still have starved, if other more effectual steps had not been taken; and the sums advanced to the Railway Companies, large as they would have been, would not have perceptibly diminished the expense of feeding a whole nation*. When this primary object had been attained, and all the funds had been raised by loan which the state of Ireland required, the Government was then in a position to consider what assistance

* Lord George Bentinck stated that 1500 miles of railroad would give constant employment, either on the line or in the various occupations connected with it, to 110,000 able-bodied labourers and artificers, representing, with their families, 550,000 persons; but even supposing that all these had been set to work at once, they would have been selected from the classes of persons least likely to require charitable assistance, while the weak and infirm would have been systematically excluded. The number of persons for whom the Government had to provide the means of subsistence at this crisis, was upwards of three millions; and this had to be done in the neighbourhood of their own homes, which could not be accomplished by means of railroads, employment on which is confined to particular localities. The number of persons stated in the House of Commons as likely to be employed on railroads in Ireland was greatly overrated; the general surface of the country requires scarcely any deep cuttings or embankments, and the eskars, through which the cuttings are made, offer the finest possible material for ballasting.

could be given to railroads in common with other works of public utility; and 620,000*l.* was voted by Parliament to be lent to Railways which were legally able to borrow, owing to their having paid up half their capital, and could undertake to expend within a certain fixed time, another sum of their own equal to that advanced to them. By the aid thus given, the great South-Western Railway of Ireland will be enabled to employ a large number of men throughout the winter, and the important object of opening the communication between Dublin, Cork, and Limerick, will be accomplished at a much earlier period than would otherwise have been the case.

The other works in progress in Ireland with the aid of grants or loans from Parliament, are as follows: the Shannon navigation, which has been in operation for several years; the construction of new floating docks and markets at Limerick; works at Hawlbowlane, with a view to render that place more useful as a naval station; four great works of combined navigation and drainage; the construction of three new colleges, and of several prisons and lunatic asylums; and the repair and construction of

fishery piers, for which 50,000*l.* was voted in the session of 1846, and a further sum of 40,000*l.* in the session of 1847.

Having thus furnished as clear a sketch as the variety and complexity of the incidents would allow, of this remarkable crisis in our national affairs, when the events of many years were crowded into two short seasons, and a foundation was laid for social changes of the highest importance, it may be asked, what fruits have yet appeared of this portentous seed-time, and what the experience is which we have purchased at so heavy a cost?

First, it has been proved to demonstration, that local distress cannot be relieved out of national funds without great abuses and evils, tending, by a direct and rapid process, to an entire disorganisation of society. This is, in effect, to expose the common stock to a general scramble. All are interested in getting as much as they can. It is nobody's concern to put a check on the expenditure. If the poor man prefers idling on relief works or being rationed with his wife and children, to hard labour; if the farmer discharges his labourers and

makes the state of things a plea for not paying rates or rent; if the landed proprietor joins in the common cry, hoping to obtain some present advantage, and trusting to the chance of escaping future repayments, it is not the men, but the system, which is in fault. Ireland is not the only country which would have been thrown off its balance by the attraction of "public money" à *discretion*. This false principle eats like a canker into the moral health and physical prosperity of the people. All classes "make a poor mouth," as it is expressively called in Ireland. They conceal their advantages, exaggerate their difficulties, and relax their exertions. The cottier does not sow his holding, the proprietor does not employ his poor in improving his estate, because by doing so they would disentitle themselves to their "share of the relief." The common wealth suffers both by the lavish consumption and the diminished production, and the bees of the hive, however they may redouble their exertions, must soon sink under the accumulated burden. The officers of Government, overborne by numbers, and unable to test the interested representations pressed upon them from all quarters, cannot

exercise their usual watchful care over the expenditure of the public money. Those persons who have the will to do their duty, have not the power. Those who have the power, have not the will. There is only one way in which the relief of the destitute ever has been, or ever will be, conducted consistently with the general welfare, and that is by *making it a local charge*. Those who know how to discriminate between the different claims for relief, then become actuated by a powerful motive to use that knowledge aright. They are spending *their own money*. At the same time, those who have the means of employing the people in reproductive works, have the strongest inducement given them to do so. The struggle now is to keep the poor off the rates, and if their labour only replaces the cost of their food, it is cheaper than having to maintain them in perfect idleness.

Another point which has been established by the result of these extensive experiments in the science, if it may be so called, of relieving the destitute, is that two things ought to be carefully separated which are often confounded. Improvement is always a good thing, and relief is occasionally a necessary

thing, but the mixture of the two is almost always bad; and when it is attempted on a large scale without proper means of keeping it in check, it is likely to affect in a very injurious manner the ordinary motives and processes by which the business of society is carried on. Relief, taken by itself, offers, if it is properly administered, no motive to misrepresent the condition of the people; and being burdensome to the higher, and distasteful to the lower classes, it is capable of being carefully tested and subjected to effectual controul. But when relief is connected with profitable improvements and full wages, the most influential persons in each locality become at once interested in establishing a case in favour of it, and the higher are always ready to join with the lower classes in pressing forward *relief works* on a plea of urgent general distress, which it may be impossible to analyse and difficult to resist. Relief ought to be confined as much as possible to the infirm and helpless. Wages, by means of which improvements are carried on, should be given by preference to the able-bodied and vigorous. Relief ought to be on the lowest scale necessary for subsistence. Wages should be

sufficiently liberal to secure the best exertions of the labourer. Relief should be made so unattractive as to furnish no motive to ask for it, except in the absence of every other means of subsistence. Improvements should be encouraged and urged forward by every practicable means, both as regards the parties undertaking them, and those by whom they are executed. If labour is connected with relief, it should only be as a test of the destitution of the applicant, and of his being consequently entitled to a bare subsistence, in the same way as confinement in a workhouse is also a test; and the true way to make relief conducive to improvement, is to give the rich no choice between maintaining the able-bodied labourers as paupers, or employing them on full wages on profitable works, and to take care that the poor have no reason to prefer living on public alms, to the active exercise of their industry in their own behalf.

Among all our discouragements, there are not wanting many and sure grounds of hope for the future. The best sign of all is, that the case of Ireland is at last understood. Irish affairs are no longer a craft and mystery. The abyss has been fathomed. The

famine has acted with a force which nothing could resist, and has exposed to view the real state of the country, so that he who runs may read. We have gained, both by what has been unlearned and by what has been learned during the last two years : and the result is, that the great majority of people, both in Ireland and England, are now agreed upon the course which ought to be pursued, in order to arrive at the wished-for end. The attention of the two countries has also been so long directed to the same subject, that a new reciprocity of interest and feeling has been established, and the public opinion of each has begun to act upon the other with a force which was never felt before.

The Irish have been disabused of one of the strangest delusions which ever paralysed the energies of a naturally intelligent and energetic people. Those who knew the country best, were aware of the habitual dependence of the upper classes upon the Government ; and it was a common saying of former days, that an Irish gentleman could not even marry his daughter without going to the Castle for assistance. The vulgar idea was, that when difficulties occur-

red, every personal obligation was discharged by "bringing the matter under the consideration of the Government;" and if, in addition to this, "a handsome support" was promised, it seldom meant more than helping to spend any public money that might be forthcoming. But it was reserved for that potent solvent, the Famine, to discover to the full extent, this element of the national character. To pass with safety through this great crisis, required that every man, from the highest nobleman to the meanest peasant, should exert himself to the utmost of his means and ability; instead of which, the entire unassisted burden of employing all the unemployed labourers of Ireland, of improving all the unimproved land of Ireland, and feeding all the destitute persons in Ireland, was heaped upon a Board consisting of five gentlemen, sitting in an office in Dublin. The example of the gentry was followed with customary exaggeration by the lower orders, and throughout extensive districts, the cultivation of the land was suspended in the spring of 1847 until it should be seen what "encouragement" the Government would give, or, as it was sometimes ingenuously expressed, "We expect the

Government will till the ground." It is also a fact that the people in some parts of the West of Ireland neglected to a great extent to lay in their usual winter stock of turf in 1847, owing to the prevalence of a popular impression that the Queen would supply them with coals. Ireland has awakened from this dream by the occurrence of the most frightful calamities, and it has at last begun to be understood that the proper business of a Government, is to enable private individuals of every rank and profession in life, to carry on their several occupations with freedom and safety, and not itself to undertake the business of the landowner, merchant, money-lender, or any other function of social life. Reason is now able to make herself heard, and there has not been wanting many a warning and encouraging voice from Ireland herself, declaring—"The prosperity of Ireland is only to be attained by your own strong arms. We are able to help ourselves. We will no longer be dependent on the precarious assistance received from other lands. We will never rest until every sod in Ireland brings forth abundantly—till every inch of ground is in its highest and fullest state of

bearing. In a short time we shall have among us more industry and exertion, less politics and more ploughing, less argument and more action, less debating and more doing*."

The uniting power of a common misfortune has also been felt throughout the British Empire. Those who had never before exchanged words or looks of kindness, met to co-operate in this great work of charity, and good men recognised each other's merits under the distinctions by which they had been previously separated. The Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy vied with each other in their exertions for the famishing and fever-stricken people, and in numerous instances their lives became a sacrifice to the discharge of their exhausting, harassing and dangerous duties. To the priests all were indebted for the readiness with which they made their influence over their flocks subservient to the cause of order; and the minister of religion was frequently summoned to the aid of the public officer when all other means of restraining the excited multitude

* " Speech of Mr. Richard Bourke, M.P. for Kildare, to his father's tenantry, September 1847.

had failed*. The political dissensions which had distracted Ireland for centuries became suddenly allayed. The famine was too strong even for the mighty demagogue, that great mixed character to whom Ireland owes so much good and so much evil. People of every shade of political opinion acted together, not always in an enlightened manner, but always cordially and earnestly, in making the social maladies of Ireland, and the means of healing them, the paramount object. In the hour of her utmost need, Ireland became sensible of an union of feeling and interest with the rest of the empire, which would have moved hearts less susceptible of every generous and grateful emotion

* Although both did their best, it is fair to state that the Protestant clergy had some advantages which the Roman Catholic clergy did not possess. The Protestant clergy were assisted by liberal subscriptions from England; and as their stipends are primary charges on the rent, they were regularly paid even during the period of the greatest distress. The Roman Catholic clergy, on the contrary, depend, both for their own subsistence, and for the means of helping their poor and ignorant people, upon the voluntary contributions of the people themselves; and when these had nothing to give, owing to the failure of their crops and the want of employment, the clergy were reduced to great straits, which they bore with exemplary patience. The fees on marriages and baptisms which are the principal source of the income of the

than those of her sons and daughters*. Although the public efforts in her behalf were without parallel in ancient and modern history, and the private subscriptions were the largest ever raised for a charitable object, they were less remarkable than the absorbing interest with which her misfortunes were regarded for months together both in Parliament and in society, to the exclusion of almost every other topic. It will also never be forgotten that these efforts and these sacrifices were made at a time when England

Roman Catholic clergy, almost entirely ceased in some parts of the country. It is much to the credit of the poor Irish, that now that they have been deprived of the potatoes on which they had been accustomed to bring up their families, marriages have become much less frequent.

* "A great deal has been written, and many an account given, of the dreadful sufferings endured by the poor, but the reality in most cases far exceeded description. Indeed, none can conceive what it was but those who were in it. For my part, I frequently look back on it as a fearful and horrid dream, scarcely knowing how sufficiently to express gratitude to the Almighty for having brought this country through it, even as it is. If the first measures which prepared us to meet the second and severest calamity had been neglected, it is frightful to suppose what would have been the state of this afflicted country. My opinion is, that there are but very few who will not gratefully remember the generous and prompt relief afforded in this time of trouble; such sufferings, and such help, cannot be easily forgotten."—CAPTAIN MANN'S NARRATIVE.

was herself suffering under a severe scarcity of food, aggravated by the failure of the cotton crop, and by the pecuniary exhaustion consequent upon the vast expenditure for the construction of railways. Even in such a state of things, though serious injury was done to all her interests by the Irish Loan, and though the pressure upon the labouring classes was greatly increased by the wholesale purchase of their food, that it might be given without cost to the starving Irish, yet every sacrifice was submitted to without a murmur by the great body of the people.

Although the process by which long-established habits are changed, and society is reconstructed on a new basis, must necessarily be slow, there are not wanting signs that we are advancing by sure steps towards the desired end. The cultivation of corn has to a great extent been substituted for that of the potato; the people have become accustomed to a better description of food than the potato*; conacre, and the

* The Irish peasant made up for the deficiency of nutritive qualities in the potato, by the quantity he ate, amounting generally to as much as fourteen pounds in a single day; and it was therefore a general complaint at first, that the Indian corn left an uneasy sensation, arising from the absence of the habitual distension of the organs

excessive competition for land, have ceased to exist; the small holdings, which have become deserted, owing to death, or emigration, or the mere inability of the holders

of digestion. The half raw state in which it was often eaten, arising partly from ignorance of the proper mode of cooking it, and partly from impatience to satisfy the cravings of hunger, also concurred with the previous debilitated state of the people, to produce sickness when it was first introduced. All this, however, has been got over, and the people have now not only become accustomed to the use of a grain food, but they prefer it, and declare that they feel stronger and more equal to hard work under the influence of a meal of stirabout, than of potatoes; and their improved appearance fully bears out this conclusion. One main cause of the fact which has been so often remarked, that the Irishman works better out of Ireland than in it, is, that when he leaves his native country and obtains regular employment elsewhere he commences at the same time a more strengthening diet than the potato. It is commonly observed in Canada, that the Irish emigrants, although a much larger race of men than the French Canadians, are, for some time after their arrival, inferior to them as farm labourers; and this difference is attributed to their food. The Canadian labourer, who receives his food as part of his hire, has an ample breakfast on bread and milk. He dines at midday on soupe aux pois, with a full quantity of salt pork and bread à discrétion. At four o'clock he is allowed a luncheon of bread and onions, and at night he has a ragout of meat and vegetables for his supper. He however works laboriously, and generally from sunrise to sunset, and is scarcely ever absent a day from his work. An Irishman cannot endure this continuous labour without better food than the potato; and in every way it is

to obtain a subsistence from them in the absence of the potato, have, to a considerable extent, been consolidated with the adjoining farms; and the middlemen, whose occupation depends upon the existence of a numerous small tenantry, have begun to disappear. The large quantity of land left uncultivated in some of the western districts is a painful but decisive proof of the extent to which this change is taking place. The class of offences connected with the holding of land, which was the most difficult to deal with, because agrarian crimes were supported by the sympathy and approbation of the body of the people, and were generally the result of secret illegal associations, fell off in a remarkable degree*; and although offences against other kinds of property increased, owing to the general distress, the usual difficulty was not experienced in obtaining convictions. The much-desired

desirable to teach him the use of a more substantial diet, both to enable him to give a proper amount of labour for his hire, and in order to raise him to a higher standard as a social being. We shall not consider the object finally accomplished until the people of Ireland live upon a bread and meat diet, like those of the best parts of England and Scotland.

* The following is the proportion of agrarian crimes

change in the ownership of land appears also to have commenced; and when great estates are brought to the hammer now, instead of being sold, as formerly, *en masse*, they are broken up into lots*, which opens

in each quarter from January 1845, to November 1847 :

In the Quarter ending

Jan. 31, 1845,	the proportion is one in	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
April 30, 1845,	" "	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
July 31, 1845,	" "	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Oct. 31, 1845,	" "	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Jan. 31, 1846,	" "	4
April 30, 1846,	" "	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
July 31, 1846,	" "	8
Oct. 31, 1846,	" "	19
Jan. 31, 1847,	" "	54
April 30, 1847,	" "	64
July 31, 1847,	" "	42
Oct. 31, 1847,	" "	12

The increase of agrarian crimes which has lately taken place, is more connected with resistance to the payment of rents, than with opposition to ejectments from the possession of land; and it has been almost entirely confined to the counties of Tipperary, Clare, Limerick, and Roscommon. Out of 195 crimes committed in the whole of Ireland in October 1847, 139 were committed in Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary; being 71 per cent. of the whole number, although the population of these three counties is only 13 per cent. of the population of Ireland. The districts in the north-west and south-west of Ireland, which suffered most from the failure of the potato crop in 1845-6, were at the same time remarkable for the absence of atrocious crimes.

* The manner in which the Clanmorris and Blessing-

the door to a middle class, more likely to become resident and improving proprietors than their predecessors, and better able to maintain the stability of property and of our political institutions, because they are themselves sprung from the people. The most wholesome symptom of all, however, is that a general impression prevails, that the plan of depending on external assistance has been tried to the utmost and has failed; that people have grown worse under it instead of better; and that the experiment ought now to be made of what independent exertion will do. This feeling has been much strengthened by the necessity which has been imposed upon the upper classes through the Poor Law, of caring for the condition of the people; and the attention of the country gentlemen has in many districts been seriously directed to the means of supporting them in a manner which will be alike beneficial to the employer and the employed.

The poet Spenser commences his view of the state of Ireland by these discouraging observations: "Marry, so there have been

ton properties, and a portion of that belonging to the Cunningham family, have been disposed of, are instances in point.

divers good plots devised, and wise counsels cast already about reformation of that realm, but they say it is the fatal destiny of that land, that no purposes whatsoever which are meant for her good, will prosper or take good effect; which, whether it proceed from the very genius of the soil, or influence of the stars, or that Almighty God hath not yet appointed the time of her reformation, or that he reserveth her in this inquiet state still for some secret scourge, which shall by her come into England, it is hard to be known, but yet much to be feared." Our humble but sincere conviction is, that the appointed time of Ireland's regeneration is at last come. For several centuries we were in a state of open warfare with the native Irish, who were treated as foreign enemies, and were not admitted to the privileges and civilising influences of English law, even when they most desired it. To this succeeded a long period of mixed religious and civil persecution*, when the Irish were

* Although we do not intend to excuse the system of the Penal Laws, it is fair to mention, that these measures of restraint were considered at the time to be necessary for the protection of the liberty and religion of the country, and that they were imposed at the conclusion of a des-

treated as the professors of a hostile faith, and had inflicted on them irritating and degrading penalties, of which exclusion from Parliament and from civil and military office was one of the least; the general characteristics of this epoch of Irish management being that the Protestant minority were governed by corruption, and the Roman Catholic majority by intimidation. During all this time England reaped as she sowed : and as she kept the people in a chronic state of exasperation against herself, none of her "good plots and wise counsels" for their benefit succeeded ; for there was no want of good intention, and the fault was principally in the mistaken opinions of the age, which led to persecution in other countries be-

perate struggle, the renewal of which was for a long time a source of serious apprehension. The battles of the Boyne, Enniskillen, and Aughrim, the sieges of Londonderry and Limerick, and the critical operations at Athlone, ushered in the Penal Laws, the real object of which was to keep in check the great political party which had arrayed itself on the side of the Stuarts and of their principles of Government; and as the danger diminished, these Laws were gradually relaxed until they were finally abolished by the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829. It will also be remembered that the Penal Laws were passed by the Irish Parliament and repealed by that of the United Kingdom.

sides Ireland. Now, thank God, we are in a different position; and although many waves of disturbance must pass over us before that troubled sea can entirely subside, and time must be allowed for morbid habits to give place to a more healthy action, England and Ireland are, with one great exception, subject to equal laws; and, so far as the maladies of Ireland are traceable to political causes, nearly every practicable remedy has been applied. The deep and inveterate root of social evil remained, and this has been laid bare by a direct stroke of an all-wise and all-merciful Providence, as if this part of the case were beyond the unassisted power of man. Innumerable had been the specifics which the wit of man had devised; but even the idea of the sharp but effectual, remedy by which the cure is likely to be effected had never occurred to any one. God grant that the generation to which this great opportunity has been offered, may rightly perform its part, and that we may not relax our efforts until Ireland fully participates in the social health and physical prosperity of Great Britain, which will be the true consummation of their union.

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